

## *Days of 2009*

This is the one where he leaves her, wrecks his sister's car after ten hours to Pittsburgh to see a girl who refuses because he seems empty. And this is the one where he knots his shoulders over flashcards like a fire in the frozen barracks. The one where he watches the inauguration online whispering Arabic to himself. This is the one before his first war. This is the one where he grows thankful to God on the long stretch of Virginia pike, where he finds heaven is Highway 77 southbound slack between mountains where nothing quits, and the massive hills are frozen at dusk, black waves full of terrible promise. This is the one where he's thankful for heaven and hateful that it can only exist between things. This is the one where he learns how to savor guilt, how to make it last. The one when Charleston and DC and Pittsburgh rise and recede like sewing needles, the one where he passes out in the pews of St. Matthew, and thinks he's never seen anything so bright, so bright but not blinding. It's the one where he is wrong and the one where he learns to guess what he'll long for before he gives it up, and this is the one where he gives.