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## Barefoot Behind a Jail

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I'm behind the county jail filled  
With big knuckled workers I went to high school with  
And there's Benny all smiles and "fuck dude" and  
Fingers through his hair  
And he's running at my pickup  
Giving me that look like I can save him.

So I'll tell him next time he sits  
On a gray tufted carpet in Eaton County—  
While the watch dogs howl at strangers and  
The only light is from a yellow lava lamp  
That's too fat to roll itself over—  
That he shouldn't take what they hand him anymore.

And then he's all "they got divorced" and then *no shit*  
And "I'm homeless, help me."  
Until he brings himself too close.

And his lip will curl up just past the piss  
Yellow chip at the base of his canine  
And he'll hold it there like it's their fault  
That they couldn't love each other forever.

When he hugs me I'll feel how weak  
He has become. And when I get  
Home later my lover will tell me that she never wants  
To lose me and I'll say she never will and I'll hear

My parents share the same words 20 years ago  
In their new house, over a fresh  
Puddle spreading darkly  
Through the carpet and through some shitty  
Pencil drawings of the garbage man that weren't done yet.

Back in my room my dad will ask me if I love her  
More than he loved my mom  
And I'll leave him before he gets all "I was so hopeless"  
"The things I've done Drew"  
"I'm still alive, see? See?"

I'll go next door to Evan's room and tell him that  
I'm scared. I'll lay down  
On that stupid futon mattress that smells all  
Gamey and I will hang my head off onto some loose fabric.

Stare at the ceiling, at how clean it is up there.  
And he'll tell me for the first time that he needs to be out west.  
He'll get up and look at me from the door like he can still change the world  
By running barefoot down East Kathleen while Dad drives after him.  
I'll spend my money on road signs so that he'll have to think of me still.

*Michigan, 10,025 km that way*

And before he does leave I'll bike home and lay  
Down on that saggy part of my  
Living room floor

So that I might fall through it  
Like the ice over Holland's pond  
And that I might find our shorts and underwear down there before surfacing  
And grab them from the muck and the clay  
So that I can give them to my kids one day and say "Look!  
We ran home through the snow, all the way, naked and cackling  
As our penises shriveled and our butt cheeks got red  
And your grandparents were just lying there  
Laughing, they could barely breathe"