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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"