

About the Car Ride Home

I witnessed it right as it happened:
the driver in front of me
used both hands to post a selfie
he snapped from his front-facing camera

but forgot to take the helm
of his flashy-muscle car
which like all back-handed reminders
rear-ended the woman in an SUV ahead of him

whipping his neck muscle
and splitting the windshield inside its frame
jarring the collision to an abrupt
stop.

And as I drove around
the fractured shell of his hood,
I noticed a whirlwind of brainstorming
that consumed him.

A swarm of thoughts
that wrinkled the comforts of his brow,
and the compromises
he attempted to rehearse

before his confessions spilled out
like boxed cabernet on a rug.
And while she marched over
to confront him like death,

I mistakenly made eye contact
during the slaughter.
And pondered how many times
I had become distracted

on this same route every day,
switching lanes when bumpers met
missing signs
and slashing corners.

*But will I ever be prepared
for the impact
when it greets me at the window*

of my driver's side door?

There, I adjusted
the stubborn angle
of my rear-view mirror
and forced myself onward.

Cutting the clicking sound
of my blinker, speeding forward
until they were both
as distant as stars,

I switched on my radio
to ease the tension, only to find
some lonely country singer
on the other side wailing:

*keep on a-riding,
keep on a-rolling,
cuz the road is
a-tolling.*