

## Mamma's Boy

The color of the road  
is already spreading a stain  
across his face. Dark.  
Around his eyes.  
Thick shadows with each breath.

The dusty smell of days  
and the long drone of night  
are matted through his hair  
twisted into dreads of monotony.

There is no end to Nebraska.  
It feeds off the sky.  
Brown. Layers of isolation.  
Pushing life back down  
into the earth.

He thinks it was an omen  
just three days ago when  
his traveling partner fell  
to her death, neck cracking  
strings popping tension,  
last chords squealing with release  
Mourned. Buried in her case.  
He would have sooner lost his little finger.

And here he sits waiting  
on another bus to sleep  
another town to forget  
another patch to burn on his jeans

But for the last half hour  
that bleached blonde in the Mercedes  
has washed a smile over him  
and he hasn't had time  
to check the heat of the morning  
measure it against the length of tomorrow

She asks him if he wants a ride.  
And he has to turn his head  
to keep from spilling his instinct  
into the road. No.  
He tells her no.  
He's waiting for something real.

His words are hail  
on a tin roof summer storm.  
She calls him a bastard and he mulls it over.  
He's traveled cheaper first class and  
never did like the sound of silk  
slipping over plastic.

So maybe it will be Arizona this time.  
New York has gotten mean  
and they have his number.  
California's always ripe for a gig  
even a tour, but never a Wednesday  
Never a plate of peanut butter cookies  
or tuna noodle casserole.

He wonders how much they charge  
in Tucson for a carton of freedom  
and will they accept his mother's  
American Express.