

Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal

Volume 9 | Issue 1

Article 24

June 2009

Shoulder

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Recommended Citation

Katamay, Kaja (2009) "Shoulder," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 9: Iss. 1, Article 24.
Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol9/iss1/24>

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SHOULDER

Kaja Katamay

I'm in the old white Volvo with my mom, and she's talking about why people speed through the fog.

"It's in us somehow," she says, "to screw up this way."

She says the fog pulls us in like a vortex, she saw a special about it on TV, not only can we not tell how fast we're going but are actually compelled to speed.

She says she once got a call from my aunt, saying, "I'm okay! I'm okay!"

"You're okay," my mom responded. "Great. What happened?"

There had been a 60-car pile-up in the tule fog on Highway 99, the route my aunt normally took to work. She was calling the way you would if you'd been scheduled to get on a plane that had crashed, loved ones wondering if you're dead.

"And, bless her heart, no one had heard about it."

The best way to visualize tule fog, which is regional, is to realize how little you can see right in front of you. Like how once, when my mom was in high school, she and a date got stuck in a bad patch of it between our town and the next one over, and they made it home driving with the passenger side door open, my mom feeling for the shoulder of the road with her hand.