

# THE LONG VALLEY

## GEORGE GUIDA

Mobile homes and appaloosa mares.  
Everything's for sale in the valley.  
In a fishing town Laundromat,  
all the ways to sell yourself  
are posted on flyers with tear-off tabs.  
One confuses the next.  
Everything has a name in the valley.  
Every name names a name.

When no one buys the thing,  
the flyers yellow, the appaloosas roam  
the trailer parks. We roam  
this Indian valley like the lost  
pioneers we are. Down here,  
the brown corn stalks of fallow  
farms block out the sun,  
stop dials and smother cell phones.

We don't believe this could all be  
bought and sold, like dropping quarters  
into machines whose doors don't lock.  
Someone always slips in to steal  
the pillowcases you bought on sale.

Not everything in the valley  
has a price, so we do sixty-five  
on the two-lane route, to feel the Gs,

the curves and dips that seem to want  
you on earth. We didn't know  
the valley ended at a mining town  
with its tribe of hills, where the dead  
main street convinces you  
you came this far without cause.  
On the street an old folks' posse  
shuffles their way to the firehouse

ice cream social. They've lived alone  
in the valley's lifetime Saturday.  
If only you'd known them when,  
but then you'd be here too, forever  
wishing you'd learned decades ago  
that your money's no good here,  
at least for the things you need,  
that the valley has no gentle end.