

FUNERAL GAMES

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Imagine you were still
here, that you never left
your wife and your children
in the night, to cross eight
states for as many years.
Your daughter gallops onward
like a charioteer, but at the lake's
edge, your sons are still building
the fire, watching the bobber
drift, suspended between
the whiskey-dark surface and stiff
autumn air. They are boxing
your ears where you lie
as still as an old photograph,
scar visible on your forehead,
bottle spilled beside
the ring of rocks, draining
the dregs for that contest
already won. You told me
you were happiest at sixteen,
when the girls too good
to speak to you at school
would open their windows

slowly in the clean darkness.

This, too, will smolder
until morning comes
and I shake this miserable
dream, borrowed like a leaky
Jon boat from some silent
semaphore, keys to a house
long gone, locks changed,
the stucco now a shade
of robin's egg. The neighbors
moved and left behind
no forwarding address.