

# DRIVING THROUGH NAPPANEE, INDIANA

**JUSTIN CARTER**

In a half-mile stretch, we pass  
three horse-drawn buggies,  
my girlfriend & I driving  
a rental across northern Indiana,  
returning from a week in Iowa—  
visiting her parents & eating  
gas station pizza & gas station  
sandwiches— to Ohio, to more  
& more weeks of roller items. This  
is all I can think of when I see  
the Amish man & the shiver  
of his horse— can they enjoy  
these things? Can they go  
to Circle K & give a man \$3.33  
& receive, in return, two hot dogs,  
chips, a fountain Coke—  
pop, they call it up here—  
though what I should consider  
as I approach them this head-on  
is how dim the lanterns hanging  
from their hooks shine, how  
I could have hit one of them if  
I'd been checking Google Maps,

& how this town both embraces  
& denies— stores & stores  
filled with jellies & dried meats  
positioned next to the McDonald's  
& Wendy's that they probably  
can't enter. I don't know if God  
says anything in the Bible about  
processed foods, or Styrofoam cups,  
but I do know I can't stay here  
long enough to find out. Too scared—  
every sharp turn, I grab the palm  
beside me as if I want to say  
brace yourself, because too many trees,  
because we don't know  
if the shadows are hiding  
the wooden wheels & their clacking  
against the asphalt. I'm too petrified  
of darkness, of swinging the car  
too wide. We drive until  
we're almost out of gas, miles  
& miles past Nappanee. We drive  
until every store has a light pole  
out front, every open sign  
is neon, & for dinner we do it again—  
reheated burritos from inside  
Valero, thirty-two more ounces  
of corn syrup for me  
& a Red Bull for her. How unlucky  
we'd be to never enjoy this.