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Riding Home

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RIDING HOME

Riding home in an open jeep
after practice we lean
into a turn, pull back, hold
ourselves straight on the steel seat.

All this country is cold.
You hear hissing heat
only in front, blowing from the brown
box below your knees.

Before the road reaches town
the boy driving sees
a field without fence on one side,
whips the wheel to his right,

and we glide
over gravel shoulder onto the light
surface snow—
the field frozen at the end of fall.

The jeep jumps from furrow to furrow.
Talk of football
of the stories of school girls stop,
riders are flung

onto the stiff farmland where we drop
to our knees. Unharmd among
the frozen rows we find
our footing and shout—

stumbling at nightfall behind
the stalled car. When we walk out
the blood still
in the veins of every voice

of its own will
rises, and we rejoice—
shouting as though the deep
ground would waken from its grim routine,

the spring soil asleep
in the bed of time, O grave and green.