

2000

Leaving Home

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Leaving Home

Only beneath the rumble-clank
of tires on corrugated
metal, the engine house roar,
and the smell of overworked machinery
is the Ohio beautiful.

Even then, it is not so much beautiful
as wild—a touch of the old magic
ready to swallow good
and evil in its churning.

The gulls that feed here are the wings
of a farther country, calls laced
with salt brine they have never known,
unless from the blue-tarped
industrial mounds along the river's bank.
Even oil slicks lose their potency, briefly,
to wind-churned white caps, and gazing
from the rail I lose the sound
of the cars idling behind me
to the urgency of movement.

Ferry riding, the rail is my home
despite rain spats or the start of ice.

Forced to settle again
on four wheels and crunching
gravel I will be queasy,
body rocking with a hint of the ocean.

—Katie Kroner '01