

# South 55

*by Daniel Crocker*

## South 55

It's like it always is  
everything looks the same  
especially in Arkansas

She said she'd follow me to  
hell, but through this land  
where everything is yellow

This is mud  
This is dead country  
This is a wife pregnant with spiders

You call and  
ask where I'm at  
Memphis  
I once laid a red headed  
bartender at the Peabody  
but I don't tell you that

It was good

Coming from Nashville  
you want to meet at  
such and such an exit

and like always  
I do

You touch my hand  
at the Waffle House

before handing me  
my ticket  
your mouth is dry  
a crushed diamond

I know your skin  
the spiral of  
freckles on your left shoulder

If it killed me  
I didn't notice

You want me to follow you home  
but I'm not going home

I can see you smiling  
in mirrored glasses  
several states behind me

If I can't think of  
anything pretty to say  
about it  
I'm sorry

and two days later  
we're lying in bed  
me and Mississippi  
too afraid to touch  
we open the window  
watch the thunder storm  
until the whole damn state  
falls asleep  
I listen to the breathing  
thunder  
your breathing

the awning outside  
looks like a bear  
in the dark

If it killed  
I've always been  
a miracle at forgetting

even in this dark country  
even in this year of cancer  
even with all of this  
I come back, Mississippi.

