

Geode

by John Olson

Gravity is grave. We know that. It is why there are tombstones of granite and marble at the cemeteries. It is why names and dates and epitaphs have been engraved on them. Gravity is grave. It holds time and space and tarpaulins in place. But what of fog? What of that nebulous mist that obscures the evergreens and wanders the earth like a refugee from the sky, where it more properly belongs? Or foghorns? The sound of the foghorn is grave. And more than grave. It has gravity but it has something else, something ineffable, something like the tremor in John Lee Hooker's voice when he sings about covering the waterfront. His voice is soft and unhurried but with something hard and endurable in it as well. There is a rock somewhere with the truth of the sky in it, the glitter of otherworldly charms that falsify the ugliness of the literal. But it is buried in the earth where it reposes in eternal silence. It is buried in the words of poets. Its universe is encased in granite, like the astronomy of pain encased in the heart of a spurned lover. You can find a geode and break it open with a hammer and find the scintillation of crystal on the interior walls. Or you can take an old vinyl 45 of John Lee Hooker and play it and hear the ultimate sadness of the world, which is also its joy, and mooring and load. You can Hooker's voice bring the sea to your door. A big old ship. And the creak and barnacles of the dock. The reality of all that. If you smashed Hooker's voice open you would find the scintillation of crystal. You would find an old beauty. You would find proof of heaven. You would find the brood of gravity.

