The Greatest Public Works Program

by Laurel Snyder

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You're passing
some shitty little
town lost along
the drear interstate.

In a dim afternoon
downpour—
with no gas, no
phone, no family.

Windows open
because the car.
Because the fogged
windshield hates you.

Wet and watching
your map lift suddenly
from the dash, whip
through a slick window,

away, away, away,
sodden, useless, gone
forever in the gray
been left behind—

And that's the moment
you face the road,

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the constellation of
ahoy and already,

see the map waiting
beneath your tires.
That's when a swell, a rising,
the promise of there.

That's when you know
ahead will be else, other,
at least not *here.* Maybe
even dry, with coffee.

That's when, driving
on fumes, tired
past gone, you notice
the sky pink up.

The rain lifts, clouds
scatter, and you suddenly
remember—Hope
has no rearview,

can't live in memory.
Hope wakes starving
in the storm,
to off and hunt.