

Mary Cantrell

While I Wait

You drive alone beneath
the Oklahoma sunrise,
violet-pink veins etched
in the sky, the world

thick with shadow,
the silence of morning,
and ahead, nothing but
sunburnt landscape or

the promise of
whittling away distance,
mile by mile. Gripping
the steering wheel, you push

past truck stops weave
between slow moving cars,
generic radio voices
telling you the time again

and again. In Missouri
the afternoon sky opens
in a blue-grey yawn,
the teeth of rocky hills

curl around highway,
swallowing distant cars.
You open your window
just a crack and cool air

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rushes in. Already, your heel
is numb, your elbows droop
beneath the steering wheel
and the engine's hum

is hypnotic. Uneven highway
rocks you gently and soon
your heart is just
like the moon, pale and

floating across night sky,
veiled by thin clouds,
while I wait here,
where the cold winds sigh.