

## SUMMER SONG

by Nick Thomas

Tonight the loneliness  
of youth covers me so  
it becomes me and when  
one note of the right song  
rings out I am already gone, leave my night  
job at the Davenport and start packing.

It's four hours to Seattle, I have  
topped off so I can make it without stopping.  
Eventually, magically, my arcing arrival  
in Emerald City  
in time to see the eyes  
of skyscrapers blink off, like  
snapping out of a trance.  
Far past the rain washed neon  
of Pike Place, the Sound, the Olympic  
Mountain range rises in sharp relief, a pink  
flame. On the rust-blue bay  
bright white ferries deliver day  
workers from towns without names.

I spend the day  
wandering, quiet, peripheral,  
thinking of the next move. Then I panic, return,  
cruise-control Columbia Basin, desert-blurred;  
this east-bound tradition  
seared in I can almost  
drive it with my eyes closed.

The gas light flickers  
as I crest the I-90 grade  
over Spokane. As I descend  
gold light floods over my city's skin,  
every brick and green-leaf seam.