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California Route 1

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California Route 1

Dad, I want to slap your face.
Although the blue of the Pacific
Is the color of your veins
That your hospice would not cut
To give you water, it is your fault
My son Rob won't speak to me.
We took this trip to get closer.
As your sucked-in face took heavy breaths,
You rose and screamed, "Too close!
Too damned close!"

Now on this granite outcrop
Rob stands too near the rim
And looks below to the sea-beaten
Boulders and half-buried bones.
"Dead seals," I say. My cheeks
Go red, anticipating his words.
"Shut the fuck up. No talking
In nature," he says. To please him
I have driven 139 miles in silence.
In silence, we have taken our meals.
I need to leave him; I need to drive.
In my rearview mirror Rob gets smaller
And smaller. I mean to speed up,
But my foot slams on the brakes.

-Marc Tretin
Valley Stream, NY