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Divorce

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Divorce

Silence. A frigid eve,
a winding road devoid of cars.

Silence. My father steers
our rust-spot laden station wagon
filled with putrid hockey gear,
breath frozen 'round his face.

Silence. Not long before,
he blew the whistle, shrill staccato stopping play.
Voice grinding like a cutting saw,
stick pointing like a conductor's wand,
he'd shown us skaters where to pass.

Silence. Now in his seat,
his whistle stowed, his thundering call
lay dormant, a bear retreated to its den.

Silence. Dad eyes the snow,
a detective seeking hints of road.
Then slowing, he turns; we stop.

Silence. Inside the car,
the whooshing, whirring heater breathes,
the engine trembles beneath hood's frost.
No words yet this eve.

Silence. Night approaches
as sun vacates the December dusk.
Dad leans against his vinyl seat,
tears glistening off his sunken cheeks.

Silence. My pulse starts throbbing,
my teenage heart a churning train.
I stare ahead, unsettled,
afraid to whisper, “What is wrong?”

Silence. A secret sobbing
fills our silver Chevrolet.
Dad’s anguished voice, like a wounded moose:
“Mom’s not coming home.”

Silence. Stunned I sit,
mouth now dry like winter air.
Draped upon the steering wheel,
my crumpled father heaves and heaves.

Silence. Just the trees,
tall white pines with pillow cones
festooned with the Christmas snow,
hear the silence crush my Dad.

-David Laliberte
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