

Lake Geneva

The Handsome Family

You are crouched before the fire in a state park by the highway
and through the heavy pine trees ten-ton trucks go groaning by
Like the screams of your Aunt Barbara
who went crazy in the '70's,
wrote poems to Jimmy Carter but forgot to feed her kids

But, it's the first time you're together since he got out of the hospital
Raccoons in the darkness drag off your hot dogs buns
But, you're happy just to lie there in a plastic tent
from Wal-Mart like sticks and fallen dead leaves to feed the fire of the world

Because which is more important, to comfort
an old woman or see visions of the heavens in the stumps of fallen trees?
Albert Einstein trembled when he saw that time was water,
seeping through the rafters to put out this burning world

Next morning you're at Waffle House
Toast and eggs and hash browns
Truckers chain-smoke Camels over plastic cups of juice
And you remember how he cried

when they strapped him to the stretcher,
convinced his arms were burning with electricity from heaven
You remember how he told you that black holes were like Jesus
And the crucifix was a battery that filled the air with fire.