

# First Job

Allison Green

Half hour out  
of Minneapolis  
I exit the freeway  
and take the long  
black-as-winter road  
that cuts through  
farmers' fields to  
the new community  
college. The full-timers  
long gone home,  
I join the second shift  
pulling into the lot.  
Freelancing stretches  
my CV to half a page.  
A master's and you can teach  
if you show up.

Maybe I was  
teaching and maybe  
they taught  
themselves. Those  
were the days  
students asked  
about my age. The nights  
blur but for one  
young man who dreamed  
of college-going,  
studenthood. And on  
that night, although  
I detoured after class,  
made copies, took my  
time, when I emerged  
into the lot, he happened  
to be sitting in his car.  
In yellow dashboard light,  
he smiled. I waved.  
He led me to the salted  
road. We raced.

String of streetlights,  
string of dreams. Someone  
dreamed that school  
into a field where no community

yet lived. And I was teacher  
in name only. The young  
man sent a smile from car  
to car. I knew what he was doing  
but not what I was,  
claiming chalk. Flirting  
with a future. The next week  
he'd composed himself  
and I'd reclaimed the desk.  
He didn't wait in the lot  
again. But that long road  
between fields waited.  
The string of streetlights.  
Snow shadowing snow.  
The road salted, cold.