

Sunday Drives

When we had nowhere to go we went there.
On sabbaths we chased the Lord of roads,
down concessions we made to permanence,
explored the dying country and the houses
on farm lanes peaked in a cathedral keyhole
where God sat in a dormer above the door.

My father bought an enormous four-door
sedan to pack the family, yet inside there
was room to stretch, the ignition keyhole
a port of entry to chicory and milkweed roads.
In memories of those Sundays I house
the secret desire for a lost permanence,

pulling over to pee and hearing the permanence
of birdsong, gravel dust caked to the door,
and larks rising in the fields. At our house
there was sustenance, enough love, yet there
were times when the heart ached for roads
that led to the world. The key had no keyhole.

Winter shut us in. A window was a keyhole
where we saw the yard buried in a permanence
of snow. Through frost I imagined roads
that offered the story of barns, a grey door,
signs of the past, words for continuity; for there
among the waist-high weeds between house

and barn collapsing as if a dream, I could house
an absurd thought of who I was, a keyhole
camera to capture my story projected there –
great grandfather labouring, the lost permanence
of hopes never attained, a path to the chapel door
strewn with the bones of knights on a road

that brought us this far. I looked back. The road
billowed and curled in dust the way an old house
is covered in ivy and memory, a creaking door
opening slowly in a breeze, a rusted keyhole,
an eye on the other side, a phantom permanence
that had to move on, that had to leave us there

as we drove away, each door locked, each keyhole
glistening in penitentiary steel; the road, the house
all lost to time, a permanence we didn't find there.

BRUCE MEYER