

Zara Raab

Hogback

The blue Chevy with the windows down
is his idea of indoors, summers;
he has the cast of mind of hogback,
the temperament of coarse-grained basalt;
his stained, half-missing fingers fisted
over the wheel, he curses, and pulls
the trigger on a harem of does,
(and misses) downwind in the tare grass,
then roars into third so's to bypass
thinning pinewoods and ferret the coves
for three braces of pearly mollusk.
He's a jack-of-all trades. Come sundown
to the lit sawmill, he'll strut around,
trimming the burl and burning the husks.

His new woman stands by the oven
of her gold-dun kitchen, baking rusks,
she has a mind of wide open fields,
at home in fescue, tare and chickweed.
Come Sundays, he jaws the venison,
she revs the Chevy's V-8 engine,
or sights along a twenty-two:
She's coming along, he says, none too soon.
This very morning she took her knapsack
to the blue-lupin pastures, loony
as a bluebird among the dobbins.
Any day now, she'll mount the hogback,
track bucks with points on the knobby spine,
and shoot to kill, too, and not soften.