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Overnighter

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OVERNIGHTER

This motel registers only
after you've passed it,
so pale and insecure
on the other edge of any road
that you're never sure whether
you've seen a sign at all
or witnessed the window
a convention of clouds
like blunt cheroots
close on the scrubbed sky.
Immediately in love with
its vacancies you scour
your pockets for change spare
enough to purchase it;
you want to tuck it snugly
under your bony arm, a worn
and grabbed bag for whenever
you and your business go about.
The ceilings do not stoop
to idle chatter, the doors
won't admit indiscretions
beyond disclosing the towel
fingered, snapped, and snatched
so vigorously entire chapters
of a ten-cent romance go blind
to their own brassy purity:
here even the keyholes wink.

Framed by those peeling sills
goings on go on and on.
The hallway for instance
saunters past the undeniably
welcome mat your heart wears
like a lobster bib each time
you near this motel, until,
sick with kneeling neon
invitations you slink
guiltily up to the night desk.
The clerk tells you you
can't buy it it is not for sale
at any price except tonight
for the rest of your life.