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Early Shift

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She had wanted to walk out into the desert to look at the sky. Now, this seems beside the point. There are stars enough, and the desert is there, but she's tired, and in this tiredness she realizes that she knows all she is going to know. She rests her head on the roof of the car. On the highway below a truck backfires.

Robin Beeman

Early Shift

What moves him to wake
from dark into dark,
to wander sleep-baffled
from bed to the lighted hall?
What shakes the dream out,
this slow acceptance in?
He pulls back the curtain,
sees the homes of his neighbors,
faces what makes him daily
rise, the spin of wheels
and gears that requires him
to dress his body, one arm,
one leg at a time, and feed it.
He passes each morning the beds
of his children, touches his lips
to the rise and fall of their sheets,
but resists his desire
to lift their charmed bodies
and carry them with him,
never speaks to calm
the muttering that breaks
from his wife as she sleeps.
What in that blue dawn makes him
shine his car lights into day,
knowing when he comes back
none of this will be changed?

Martha Wickelhaus