

Fall 2000

Detour Into What Cheer

Steven Petkus

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Petkus, Steven (2000) "Detour Into What Cheer," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 54 , Article 9.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss54/9>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in CutBank by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

DETOUR INTO WHAT CHEER

My brother nudges me.

Any minute now, something will happen.

Raymond Carver, "Drinking While Driving"

My brother and I were drinking cans of Old Style
between Oskaloosa and South English.
I was doing the driving, happy I still owned
the old family wagon, not thinking
of the student loans that kept it up.
We held the beers low, between our legs.
It was four miles off the highway to What Cheer,
where my brother got out
to snapshoot the town water tower
and a grain elevator with a squat cartoon man
painted on the side. I sipped warm beer
and watched him in the rearview mirror.
He makes it, everything look
so easy, I thought.
When he backpedaled up the road
for a better angle, I lost sight of him
and yanked at the mirror.
I twisted against the belt, spilled some beer.
After a while, I laid my hand on the wheel
and watched birds hop along the ground.
"Bird," I told them. At some point,
my brother got back in the car.
He popped a couple of fresh cans
and caught the overgrown sign for Route 92.
"So now you drive with one hand," he said.