

16th Street

I. The Present Driving

*I was driving in a light rain on 16th street
Glancing at the deepening shadows of the trees
Listening to the radio play love songs
Thinking about her.*

*Sometimes I live in a vacuum, the world slipping away
From me and to me all things in my life are like the trees
I am much like a dreamer who does not move restlessly
Who does not moan.*

*I was driving in the dreamy mist, a mist of fractured diamonds
But no more hard or broken than my beating heart
Not anywhere as desolate as 16th street
Even with its trees.*

*Not knowing when this street will end, the shadows end
Not seeking, not finding, never wanting to rest or stop
I imagine a thousand trees blowing in a rain
Under the Chitina sky.*

*I have lost my soul on this dark street, its pavement cries
I have wandered like a vagabond searching, never finding
Alone in my car I hear Billie Holiday
She fades in and out.*

*I do not know why I am here in this world of fractured dreams
I no longer sense the rain before it comes a crying
Nor do I hear the geese or laugh like my father used to
My mouth is dry.*

—Paul Tony