

Hands

Someone's bought up all the cheese at Albertson's grocery.

There's a few bags of shredded cheddar left on the shelf

but they're all molded up at the seams

and cheddar is no good for lasagna anyway.

My kindergarten teacher

Miss Pam or Miss Patty or something with a P

is calling my name from over by the yogurt

I don't think I've seen her in five years, since two-thousand-and-twelve (all us kids thought the world would end that year but it didn't)

and Miss P-something stops her cart three feet from where I'm standing next to the cheap margarita mix and I keep my fists in my pockets.

She mentions my height and "the silly weather" but her eyes don't mean it and she's tapping her purple nails on a carton of two-percent milk

and I can tell she is thinking to ask me about you now so I slip away before she does.

I get outside and my palms are sweating through my jacket now

and the parking lot has almost cleared out for the night spare the ten-or-so big trucks left here by miners

who took the company bus to work at four am and I consider waiting on the curb for the bus to pull in

and the miners to retrieve their pickups so I can see this whole lot empty

but it's an easy two-and-a-half hours west from Stillwater to Livingston

even in the best of conditions

and it's December and it might be snowing somewhere along I-90.

I remember my mother's car warms slow in bone-dry cold like this so I dig through the backseat in the dark and pull on a blue fleece sweatshirt with some dried milkshake on the sleeves and wait for the engine to run quiet.

I'm keeping my fingers busy on the radio knobs and the only station

coming in clear from Bozeman is playing

a whiny pop song I must've heard a thousand times this past week

but I don't know any of the words

and I turn my eyes up toward the sunroof

and pick at the dried milkshake with a penny from the cup holder

and reach below my seat and adjust it for the third time today

shift it forward, back, up, down

and I'm making myself nauseous now

and the pop song on the radio is ending

and the engine is running quiet

and I have to be driving home

and I move my fingers to the steering wheel

and I try not to look but I do

and now I'm thinking about your hands again

if that SUV crushed them too

or if it was only your torso,

your legs.