

In Some Town's Junk Shop

JOHN HAZARD

A photo: someone's tall father leans on a shovel
in failing light. It's black and white, but I see
the orange in the tip of his smoke.

And there you are again, this time
on the chestnut mare, early morning,
the township road in front of the house.
Her flanks quiver at flies; she snorts a little,
paws the gravel. But it's you in charge up there—
or all fathers, straight as nails,
high on horses, in the flawless sun.

At a county fair, you bought an old record
calliopes braying, a flip side of steam engines
hissing and bellowing off to horizons.
I watched one night from another room
as you listened, staring down at circling vinyl
then gazing out at the dark.

Two decades later, you called to say
you'd driven my mother to Good Samaritan that night.
Beside you in the Buick, she was coughing blood
into a cup as you hauled ninety across the interstate,
cutting through hills, forcing a path in the wind—
your steady gallop saving us again, your finger
poking my chest, four hundred miles away.