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.