

Former Things Are Passed Away

REBECCA MELNYK

I.

On Saturdays, Daddy likes to take the Coupe Deville through the center of town,
a cigarette hangs carelessly from his parted lips, threatening to singe the leather,
he rolls them with Bible paper; his favorite is Revelation 21:4,
I count the streetlights that line Oglethorpe (static wardens guard the square),
the king croons through the radio; “love me tender, love me long.”

II.

On Sundays, Daddy likes to take the Coupe Deville down the dusty back roads,
the crowded church makes him feel anxious; he always puts the top down,
services always seem longer in the summer, & sweat pours off the pastor in torrents,
I count the headstones that congest Bonaventure (the angels wink as we pass),
Daddy’s baritone echoes the king’s hymn; “take me to your heart.”

III.

Most days, Momma's heavy heart anchors her to her bed,
all of Savannah watched the Coupe Deville head down the
Dixie Overland Highway,
their whispered words sting like salt on scraped knees,
I count every day that he left me behind (I'll never really know why),
the king's serenade faded with daddy's taillights; "for it's there that I belong."

IV.

These days, we can't seem to keep our heads above water,
I climb up on the roof; the sky turns my favorite shade of hyacinth,
smoke from my Revelation 21:4 floats leisurely towards the heavens,
I count the constellations he taught me (light-years between then and now),
somewhere in the darkness the king laments; "and we'll never part."