

Driving to Look Out Point to See the Sunset

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My car or yours?

We already know the answer.

Last time I drove

I got us stuck in the snow. Boots wet and the sun long set by the time my boss came charging down the interstate, laughing to yank us out with his truck.

I shiver at the thought.

I shiver at most things.

We are driving to Look Out Point to see the sunset.

This is the most light we'll get all day, what burns before it turns to ash in the sky.

The ocean is waiting there. Swallowing the shore in gulps, burnt dark against the sky, the horizon turning red and raw as my mouth in the wind.

I insist on staggering from the car onto the sand to press my heels in it. Ice underfoot clatters like dinner plates. There.

The wind stings my face and salts my skin.

I wonder, again, if this winter will ever end.

It's been the longest one I can recall.

Mild, though
(everyone says).

I think, in essence, winter is a state of mind. The simplest thoughts hold me captive,
freezing on the ridges of my brain.

At work, a woman asked me if she could give me her last name. I looked at her and shook
my head, grief in my eyes.

How to tell her, I already had one.

No, she said. For my loyalty points.

You know, my membership card?

Oh, I said.

She spelled it out for me, twice.

She earned five cents.

This is how it feels when I go to the edge of the woods and peer between the black boughs,
gritting my teeth, willing myself to go in.

I avoid the trees like an old lover: stunned by how I used to love them, afraid that they still
want me. Afraid that I still want them.

Am I really this cold, or has some shadow snuck inside me when the sun drew its shade at
four p.m.?

I don't remember.

I nudge a piece of ice with my foot watch it fleck blue and drown. I would like very much to
crawl inside a fire and burn and burn and burn.