

Crossing the State Line

When you cross the state line
from California into Nevada . . .
well . . . the cattle-crossing signs
in California feature cows
but in Nevada bulls
maybe just to remind you
of the wide open dream
of some coughed out
leather and dirt cowboy
losing at blackjack and poisoned
with tobacco and Budweiser
some old guy raised to carry
low self esteem
like a pack of Luckies
in his shirt pocket
and hook "I'd as soon kill you
as look at you" glares
across some vomit stiff patch of carpet
in Tonopa or Montgomery Pass
and end up in Reno drowning
with chf and emphysema dying
in a lucky room like 21 or 7
with a nasal cannula and no family
for 300 miles around and nobody
with a Smith & Wesson .357
stuck under the seat
of a GMC 4X pickup
who's going to read some shit
like this as an elegy