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Premises

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PREMISES

She drove a truck. It wasn't
a question. Her shoulders
were wide the way they had
to be. The ball cap. The smile

like a sturgeon. In the morning,
the white cab with the rummaged
gray grill-work, hubcaps flayed
away on some two-track gaunt
and wily as a lover, ice
on the windshield to say
that nothing we make to see
through stays clear long

or ever. To her, the rifle's
chamber explicable, the gold
thread that pulls a bullet true
amid the red instant of an animal
heart. She bagging Bud Light empties
to return for deposit. She back
of the class with Kodiak green

label, her Coke bottle filling
a stickier brown. She Kmart
security in a blue pointed vest, out
in the parking lot brick-walling

the reedy punk with Green
Day's latest slunk in his boxers,
some old grief thing brined
in her chest. The kid's nose
bloodied against packed snow

and ice: accidental. The cold
and the rust smell, the plow-truck

grinding a berm against old
highway 2. Oh, she'll haul
him up by the stolen 99-cent
stretch-gloved hand with cut-out
fingers. She'll tighten the backs
of her legs for balance; her boots
with their road salt shorelines
know how to hold. If you must,

remember. But don't go judging
her lovely. Don't go hanging
the winter sun above rows
of bombed-out Chevys, don't
catch her reflection bending
gold in the sliding doors clattery
and fine as a river fit for melting,
behind them everything new.