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Rue

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Rue

I was a traveler in my day
a business traveler, territorial
in the grassy gaps.
I sold bonds
to clients hungry for bonds
in the boundless sales call
door to door among
“folks.”
It was a job
I was born with.
I had a heavy sample bag
rubber-banded stack of calling cards
and leather binder
(embossed)
opening upon a vista of
lamination, obligation
rumination.

I furnished
a nation to the chemical engineers and wives
of Schenectady, New York,
over coffee, over roast beef
and piano, a kingdom, a nation, a
principality, landlocked state, aspirational acreage,
spiritual fallout hideout.
I showed a picture of my boy
cross-legged in front of a backdrop
of a glaciated hanging valley
deep in the transaction
among handshakes and signatures
if it came to it
This is my boy, I said
Come to me.

I was a traveler.
Later I inspected
the nickel mines near Sudbury
telling my boy about the endless
sheer black subterranean drop
in the cage.
I was telling the truth
when I knew how to, as I had to, as
sales required, as stewardship permitted, long before
disembodiment.
I kept a picture of my boy
in front of a cardboard tree and treehouse platform
tacked to the upholstered
partition above my desk.
Once I brought him to the office.
He stared at himself.
“I had a treehouse then,” he said.