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-wallling 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

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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.