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Radio Night

Wulf Losee

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Radio Night

by Wulf Losee

The radio night chatters on and on
a preacher expounds upon the end times
rumors of the eschaton
drift across the continent
as his empty voice phases in and out
on the flutter of the nighttime ionosphere.

In the sidebands beside him
I hear voices rising in a murmur
callers and the talkers banked on frequencies
and cranked to amphetamine heights
across the longitudes of night.

I hunt along the dial for music to match my mood
and the rhythm of my road-weary thoughts,
but each station is the same;
the songs repeat themselves
with contemptuous familiarity;
their echoed notes and lyrics
blur into a single chord of inchoate longing.

Shut the radio off!

My thoughts pursue the caffeine's parallax
until I finally reach the jangled edge of concentration
where headlights rush to jump the divider
before the highway's curve pulls them aside;
they become red trails in my mirror,
the scattered light seeds from a torch.

At midnight I halt in a high plains town
 but I lie awake in the motel
 in starched sheets that smell of bleach,
 and my thoughts are drawn
 like frantic moths to the seam
 of sodium vapor light
 that blasts through the gap in the drapes,
 bisects my bedspread,
 like a searchlight from the parking lot.

I listen to the rushing whisper of the highway,
 and I think of the multitudes of people

traveling on the road before me,
 and on the road behind me,
 their movements hidden from me,
 except as the dopplered sound of displaced air.
 Then I hear the stuttering groan of a truck
 as it hits the downgrade,
 and that is my last thought before sleep.

