

Forgiveness
by George Burns

Now, many years later,
I stop the car and listen
to the small crinkly sounds
the engine makes
as it cools in the fog.
It could have been here,
by these dunes.

I don't know what happened.
Maybe there was a smell.
He just jumped.

Could he have survived?
And did he stand on shaky legs
waiting for us to return?

My mother and her boyfriend,
in a fog of alcohol, drove on.

Now in the distance,
the shaggy white surf
paws at the land.
I let all the windows down
and the night come in.
Start the car, drive slow.

Not looking in the backseat,
I can feel the night's
black nose,
cold and wet,
pushing against my neck.

Alaska Quarterly Review