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Easy to Love You

What do the pine boughs say?
That's easy enough, they say, *I love you*.

What does the crunching gravel say?
That's easy, it says *I love you*, too.

In fact, the whole earth says *I love you*. We can put words in-

to the mouths of gravel,
but we always turn around

at the end of the road:
Our headlights search the night,

waving around long white
carrots at the stars.

A soldier says to his enemy,
I love you with bullets.

I care about you enough, he says,
to end your suffering.

The dead soldier says *thank you*,
I love you, too; his family does not.

Firing a gun is a long road,
full of blind corner and potholes.

Wars come and go, soldiers live and die.
And we keep making more of them

every time we have sex.
We open our legs, and set them free.

The Presentation

a woman draws arrows on a flipchart
talking at the front of the room

she draws quickly, leaving the arrows incomplete,
lines and dashes with sloppy triangles

the woman is pretty and talks fast
her breasts shake as she moves

she draws more arrows
that begin to swarm and swim

at her like sperm
I start to get an erection

I'm in love with her now
but I know I can't have her

not here, not like this
I'm a married man, for crying out loud

but I'm drawn, moth like,
to her flickering beauty

she talks about how we can blow
job satisfaction

I can't believe she said those words
looking right at me, no less

she follows the buttons down my shirt
with her eyes and stops at my belt

I start to resist
how am I going to tell my wife

who will surely take the kids
and move in with her mother

I will eat dinners alone in my dark house
while my children sleep in unfamiliar beds

the woman knows I can't live like that,
not without my kids

she draws her attention to somebody else
and I sigh in my chair

after the woman finishes her talk
we all applaud and I walk up to her

looking into her eyes, I shake her hand
saying, thank you for that fabulous presentation

Toe Job

I clip the toenails
of the old folks
at the Crestview.

The tick tock of the clippers
count down the seconds
for this one here, Emma,
close to the end.

Her toes twitch when I touch them,
squeeze my fingers.
My thumb gets tangled in the jumble.

These toes will never again
fondle another's toes beneath the sheets.
No running through grass or mud
of which these toes once knew.

No giggling, no tickling,
this is not my son
resisting and wrestling,
risking having his skin snipped
or being cut too close to the quick.

Just the sound of Emma's shallow breath,
of an oxygen tank valve,
and the clicking clippers.

I spread the toes with my fingers
and hold the cracked yellow sole in my palm.