

Joseph Cooper

from The Lonely Road Home

VIII.

There are so many things I shouldn't tell you,
so many memories tied in knots
and hurled behind closed eyes,
that father was cuffed drunk
accused of regret,
that mother cupped her crotch
running barefoot across adulterated vows,
that you and I are finally
listening to the voices
in our heads, the ones
that remind us
it's never too late to be
ambiguous and that just because

you know your lines,

doesn't mean

you cannot improvise.

There are so many things I want to know.

It's happening all over again.

I want to touch you.

We're not the same at all

and I need to ask you

if this can ever be,

if we'll ever have more than

sugar grains on our lips

licked away in haste.

I need to know

if this can ever be,

if we'll ever again

hold each other in bed

under restrained

cantations of familiar promises.

I want to know we're not

confusing the first

line with the last,

that you want
a better story
covering us
than a fragile net alone
underneath the water's edge.
I don't have to tell you
that it doesn't always
come down
to the road ahead,
that we are played out,
over and over, crossed out,
whispered in sleep, forbidden
and overused, never mentioned,
addressed in absence, howled at
full moons, growling at sleight of hand,
harrowing and
absolute.
It's happening all over again.
I want to touch you.
I want to touch you again.

IX.

There is a part in this movie where

I like you and want to

be like you.

There is a part in this movie

where the landscape is

full of snow and

the water is

still and bright

and I'm too embarrassed to

tell you I've lost my way.

But I am the road and you,

you are the moon,

and the plotted line is dislocated

by our attraction,

by the eerie flashbacks

sustained from a bite

on your neck.

You tell me it's time to sleep

and that the illuminated

cities inside of me

have been set silent.

You tell me there should be a place

where the sound of breathing

goes verse chorus verse

and we just listen.

I'm saying your name,

waving my arms in the sky,

wondering if your voice

is an airplane

overhead,

an echo at the bottom of a stairwell,

a framed photograph facing

the corner afraid

of another misused

romantic sentiment.

There are no coincidences in this universe,

or so I've been told,

that you've been waiting inside

for me the entire time

wishing that every

time we kissed

we would echo

the beginning.

I'm sure you remember.

You wanted to know about my dreams

and I told you

about my younger self

eating me alive,

assisted by my mother.

We talked about genitals, alcoholism,

kindness, and schizophrenia

and you never took me home.

I'm sure you remember

kissing me

by your right fender

and making promises.

I am the moon and you,

you are the lonely road

home, pulling my

body selfishly

away from

the crash.