

A Farmer Searches for His Livestock  
During a Snow Storm

He imagines them huddled  
together by now, long

eyelashes rimed with ice.  
Their hoof prints blown over,

making them hard to track.  
Guernseys and Jerseys.

Like his grandfather,  
only Guernseys and Jerseys.

Sure, there are others  
that produce more,

the brash-colored Holstein,  
the Norwegian Red, but it's the muted tones

of his girls, their dark points,  
that stir something in him.

He loves to slide his hand  
along their warm flanks,

feel the contour, like he loves  
to run his hand over his wife's hip

as she lies on her side in their bed.  
He thinks of this as he trudges

through drifts, whistling, calling,  
listening for the lead cow's bell.

A crow sits on a fence post, its caw  
like a knell. Its dark eye  
watches him pass as snow sifts down.

Rest Stop, Eighty-Seven Miles from Asheville

The young man with the tattoo  
covering his face tells me

he has ridden his '62 panhead  
from Oregon to Maine

to pick up his girlfriend. Now  
they're on their way south, to who

knows where, towing the old cycle,  
its bored-out engine used up.

It's hard not to stare at the tribal  
swirls and stitches, the darts and dashes,

the sunbursts that blacken his face;  
the lines that uncurl from under

his shirt sleeves, his cut-offs --  
and I wonder about the woman

traveling with this man whose skin  
is a shield held against the world.

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