

Driving

JEFF OAKS

My brother reminds me of the time my father slammed a beautiful new car we owned into reverse and destroyed the transmission. He was drunk like always. We are ourselves driving back from a trip to Cape Cod where we scattered our mother's ashes into the crashing curls of the Atlantic Ocean. We have survived both of them. My brother needs to stop every hour or so to pee or to eat something. Isn't it true, I say, that once he drove into a cow field and fell asleep? My brother laughs. "Yes, he rolled it over. He woke up and crawled out. All that night we hoped he wouldn't come home, that maybe this time he'd die." "Didn't we pray for that every night?" I say. I'm the age my mother was when she divorced him finally, and we moved away, away from the terror of his tires on the gravel after midnight. All the rest of Pennsylvania for us to get through, fog and drizzles of rain in the mountains, the weaving of semis on the interstate, neither of us fathers ourselves. We take turns driving while the other one snores in the passenger seat in a very familiar way

