

EDDIE'S MOBIL

Anne Colwell

When things were slow in the garage on Saturday afternoons, Eddie watched westerns on his little TV over the cash register. He didn't like the new westerns, nothing released in the last thirty years. He liked the ones he'd watched on Saturday afternoons when he was a kid – John Wayne or the old spaghetti westerns where no one worried about the Indians and how bad they had it, none of this *Dances with Wolves* shit.

If there were no cars in the bays to work on and not too much foot traffic in the mini-mart, he'd sit on the stool behind the counter and eat the Slim Jims and think about what it must have been like living in the west: open space, prairies flat as your hand, so goddamn flat and smooth, with horses and high grass and saloons and whiskey. Nothing holding you in any direction. And you didn't have to bust your ass working in a run-down

garage and worry every month about making the payments and every day about what the Pakistani bastard down the street was charging for Ultra.

Eddie spat out the plastic he'd torn off with his teeth and slid the Slim Jim up, out of its clear casing and bit it. This wasn't where he thought he'd be when he bought the place ten years ago. Philly had changed, that was part of it. Used to be the neighborhood was Italian and a little Irish. Working people, nice, middle class people, who kept cars, brought them in to him to be fixed again and again until they couldn't afford to, until it was throwing good money after bad. Plymouths and Fords, big engines and you could open the hood and see everything you needed to see.

No one would've stuck an old wreck up on blocks. Or spent all his money on a stereo with enough bass to rattle windows a half mile away. When he bought the place, he thought he'd be able to keep the two mechanics' bays full all the time, maybe hire a few guys, and then, after a couple of years, a guy to manage the place. He thought he'd get the garage up and going and then the place would start to work for him. He would check in, of course, make sure everything was OK, but he wouldn't have to be there all the time. If the manager – his name was always Joe in Eddie's mind – if Joe had a problem, he'd call Eddie. And he'd call him "Mr. D'Nunzio" and

he'd say he was sorry, but he just didn't know what to do, and then Eddie could come down and straighten it out.

When he wasn't straightening out problems, he could maybe travel, and he'd call up Lois and say that the gas station was doing real good and he'd been thinking he'd maybe take a trip, maybe out to Arizona or even to Italy. See the town where his dad was born, up in the North. Maybe, if she wasn't doing anything, she'd come with him, for old time's sake.

It was a long afternoon and quiet, almost spring but still cold. A couple of kids from down the block bought packs of Marlboro Reds and Cokes. Eddie never carded them as long as he knew them from the neighborhood, as long as he'd seen their faces and knew they weren't narcs; he never gave them a hard time. When it started to get dark, he had a few more customers, people heading out to center city stopping to fill up the tank. One nice looking blonde in a short dress came in the store and walked around while the well-dressed man she was with pumped the gas, and cleaned his hands with a towel, careful not to get anything on his suit. She picked up cheese crackers and granola snacks and then put them back down. She said, "Thank you," when she left and then yelled across the parking lot to the guy, "They don't have shit in there. It's a dump."

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Around midnight Eddie started turning out the lights and locking up. He checked the refrigerator and freezer, took a walk through the aisles to make sure no one had put anything back wrong. Not that there'd been crowds mobbing the aisles, but still, you had to have a routine. That's what he told the kid who worked for him part-time: Jaser was his name, brown kid, swore he was no relation to the Pakistani, said he wasn't even the same tribe. Eddie caught on the word "tribe," almost asked the kid about it. Did they use that word for real or didn't they call them "clans" or "packs" or something? Not that it mattered. Be just like them, anyway, to send in spies. Swati, that was the Pakistani guy's name, the Swati Family Citgo – like that wasn't suspicious as hell.

Eddie rang out the cash register and counted the money, wetting his thumb between the tens and twenties to make sure he didn't miss one. He stuffed it all in a zippered bank bag and stuck it in the safe. He didn't let himself think if it had been a bad or a good day. The bolt lock thunked into place and the alarm light turned red. Eddie stood by the locked door, as he did almost every night, looking around before he got in the truck, looking beyond the pumps, up at the highway and the overpass. The cars made a

roaring sound like the crowd noise in a TV football game. The roar grew and then broke like a wave as each car got closer and then passed, fading into a hiss and blur of red tail lights.

If Lois had worked the 4:00 to 12:00, she might be going by right now. Eddie pictured her in the pink nurse's aide uniform, her dark hair smoothed back in a pony-tail with strays trailing out the back, the way it always used to be when she got off work, her cigarette loose in the corner of her mouth. As she took the first drag, she'd pull the cigarette tight and squint like it hurt her to do it, but not in a bad way, in the way it hurts to slide a needle into a blister or rub a knot in a sore shoulder. But maybe by now she'd finally quit smoking. She was always trying to, then she'd gain weight and go right back.

She always took the highway to work. So she was right there, right above him, twice a day. This far-away kind of closeness seemed important to him, some puzzle or great truth. Since he never knew which shift she'd have, it could be anytime that she'd be going by, or all the time, every time he looked. He thought maybe she looked down at the station, too, or maybe one day she'd pull off and fill up, just to see him for a minute and talk. If one of those smears of light were her car, maybe she'd look down right now and see him standing by the door.

But it was hard to see the gas station from the highway, let alone anyone standing in front of it. That was another thing he hadn't counted on when he bought the place. When he'd been looking it over, the real estate agent said it was "a prime location for highway traffic." But really, you couldn't see the station until you were already past it, or if you could, you couldn't tell how to get to it, all tangled as it was in side streets and row houses. Many times Eddie thought he'd get a bigger sign, a really tall one, or he'd buy one of those billboards up on 95—*Eddie's Mobil*, it would say, *take two rights at the end of Exit Ramp 29. Two rights and you'll never go wrong*. He'd use the red winged horse, too, and he'd make it big, really big. Maybe put a saddle on it and a cowboy. Of course, you couldn't do that if you kept the wings, it wouldn't fit, and besides he wondered if the franchise would let you change it around like that and thought probably not; there was probably a rule somewhere in his handbook about dicking with the logo.

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Eddie stepped off the curb and headed for his truck when a black Honda pulled up to the door of the station and a girl got out. She wore a light blue baseball cap and a pink hooded sweatshirt.

"We're closed," Eddie said, turning around to face her.

“I just need smokes,” she said. She looked at him desperately, like she had to go to the bathroom or something. She wore very dark eyeliner that she’d drawn up at the outside corners into little grins. Eddie watched her blonde ponytail swing from side to side as she turned toward the closed door of the station and then back to face him.

“You can get gas if you’ve got a credit card,” Eddie said, “but the store’s closed.”

She didn’t say anything; she turned back to the black car like she was about to get back in and Eddie put his key into the driver’s side door of the truck. Then he heard, “Open the goddamn door and give me your money.”

He turned back around and saw her face, wide-eyed and wild, and then he looked down at the little black snub-nosed pistol she held toward him in both hands, her arms locked and rigid. Something about the way she held it made the gun seem alive, like an animal she had to wrestle to hold away so it wouldn’t bite her.

Eddie had never been robbed before, though he’d worried about it, pictured different scenarios and what he might do, especially as the neighborhood changed. He’d put up the height tape up by the door, installed a camera at the back of the store, and a button under the counter that called

the cops. He hadn't bought the whole security package, though, the one that would have included cameras along the outside and 24 hour surveillance. He held his hands out, his keys dangling from the right.

"It's a timed safe," Eddie said. "I just closed it and it has a two hour delay." It had been his father's safe; his father kept it in the little back room of the bar. Eddie pictured the way his dad used to bend to it at the end of a long night, groaning, raising himself again with one hand on his knee.

"Fucking liar!" She shouted this at him, but he saw her eyes dart back to the driver of the car and then he heard the driver's voice, calmer than hers. He couldn't tell if it was a man or a woman, but just at that moment, when he heard the other voice, it occurred to Eddie that they might shoot him. He didn't so much think the idea as suddenly feel it rising, a sick nausea at the back of his throat and a cold dizzying sweat spiking up at the back of his neck and along the base of his spine.

"Give me your wallet, asshole."

Eddie took it out and started to walk toward her.

The driver said something and the girl shouted, "Throw it! Stay right where you fucking are. Throw it."

Eddie watched the wallet crumple at her feet, one side open like the wing of a dead bird. She bent to pick it up, holding the gun off balance in one hand. She didn't even bother to look inside; she flipped it to the driver and got back in the car. As they pulled away, Eddie watched the reflection of the gas station in the shiny black door; the gas station slid over the car and off of it. Then the world felt like that, hard and black, and he felt everything he knew about it sliding off the surface. He felt his knees give a little, but then he turned back to his truck and tried to put the key into the lock. His hands were shaking. "Fuck!" he yelled, as loud as he could, then he turned back around and made one hand into a gun and pointed with his finger to where the girl had been. "Bang! Bang!" he shouted. "Bang, bang, bang."

Eddie climbed into the pick-up, and turned the key. The radio erupted instantly, a song that Lois liked, one that had been popular the year they were dating; she left the CD in her car and listened to it over and over. The group was called Lighthouse or Lifehouse and the guy's voice filled the cab of Eddie's pick-up, pleading, "You and me, and all of the people with nothing to lose, nothing to prove." Eddie cursed again and hit the *off* button as hard as he could then closed his eyes and opened them, trying to think of what to do. He should call the cops. He nodded his head at the practical voice inside him

that said this. He said out loud. "I need a cop." Then, he pictured telling the story, a fat Philly cop on the nightshift writing it all down.

OK there, Mr. D'Nunzio, so you were robbed by a little blonde girl wearing a baseball cap? Right. And you think maybe the driver was a girl, too? And you didn't put up a fight or even try to get the gun when she bent down? And what was in your wallet?

About forty bucks, Eddie thought, forty bucks and the credit cards, one of them maxed out. He'd have to cancel those. He fished around in his glove compartment for loose cash. He felt a pain in his gut and ribs when he bent forward, like he'd been sucker punched. Fuck the cops, he thought. "Goddamn the fucking cops," he said out loud.

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But as he drove toward the little 24 hour grocery he always went to after work, it didn't feel right; he kept thinking of the girl's face, the strange lines at her eyes, and what it had been like to watch her wrestle the gun, point it at him. He had this story now and he couldn't tell it to the cops, but he wanted, needed to tell it to someone. Maybe he'd call Lois. It wasn't as if it would come out of the blue. He called every few months since the break-up, just to keep in touch, to see how she was doing. They never said that much,

“How’re you?” “Fine.” “How’s work?” “Fine.” Sometimes he’d drop her an email, not a long letter or anything, just a couple of lines, a joke or something. Eddie liked that they kept in touch. He could tell her his story; maybe he could make it funny and she would laugh, but she’d see, too, that it was a close call. She’d tell him how glad she was that he was okay.

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Their break-up hadn’t been all that bad. He’d had worse for sure. When Eddie first started seeing her, he’d had a great time with Lois. Of course, with any woman, it was usually great at first, but with Lois it had been different, more; he waited to see her, thought about her a lot. He took her around-- dinners, the casinos, a weekend in the Poconos once. She was fun, always a good sport, especially in bed. Then she started talking about how they could make it okay on both their salaries, how nice it might be to wake up together every morning. To put her off, he’d grab her hand, kiss her fingers, say, “Let’s just let this be fun for awhile.” But there was only one way to go once a woman got that stuff in her head; he’d seen it time and again. When it all got to be too much, he started dating someone else and let her find out.

Not that that someone else turned out to be all that great. It didn’t last two months with that one. She was a second grade teacher, real pretty and

young. Boring as shit, though. Rachel. Not a laugh within a thousand miles of her, and she'd talk all the time about the kids and how much she loved them and what they said and did and Eddie just couldn't focus on it, had no stories to tell that could match up with any of hers. He'd just listen, nod, smile and she'd go on and on.

After the first time they slept together, Rachel sent him a big goofy card with a watercolor heart on the front. Inside she wrote how much it meant and how happy she was.

Eddie made plans with Lois for Saturday and told her to meet him at the house. He said he might be a little late, to use her key, have a beer. He'd be there before long. That morning, before he went to work, Eddie left the card with the watercolor heart out on the kitchen counter where Lois would be sure to see it.

All that day he rehearsed in his head how the argument would go. He imagined Lois's accusations, the high strained voice she used when she was angry, her tears, how she'd lick them out of the corners of her lips and blow her nose. He pictured himself speaking softly, apologetic but firm; they'd made no agreements, no promises. "You know that, don't you?" She did. He even imagined that she might agree to start over again. "Back to square one."

He saw himself saying it like it had just occurred to him, a sort of compromise. Casual dates, just some fun, see if we end up some place else in the long run, down the road, you know. He could picture himself saying it, tilting his head, could hear the voice he'd use. Maybe they'd make up right there, do it on the kitchen floor, Lois all full of apology and the mad she hadn't used up in the fight. He could see how good it could be, how it could all be made right.

Driving to meet her, he had butterflies. Stage fright. Eddie was going to have to act his part: surprised, but facing the music, firm and in charge. He parked the truck down the block and walked toward his door slowly, past all the identical row houses, each with three cement steps and black iron railings. It was Christmas time and almost all the windows had lights. Mrs. Duffy's had white electric candles glowing behind the closed blinds. When he was a kid, Eddie played with the Duffy brothers, running up and down the alleys, playing stickball on the parish lawn. The brothers had married now and moved to North Jersey. Eddie heard from Mrs. Duffy a few years back that they were both working for one of the big drug companies up that way. When he saw her now, he didn't even ask about her sons, just bowed his head a little and said, "Mornin', Mrs. Duffy" and nothing else.

He looked at the other houses, all quiet with the Christmas lights blinking, and remembered when he used to know the families on the block. He was saying the names in his head as he got closer and closer to his own house: Duffy, Dominico, D'Antonio, Cunningham.

He was six feet away when he saw it there, the key dangling from the knob. That was it. She left nothing else and she put the card back where she found it. Eddie tried to call her then, a couple of times, on the cell and at home. Lois didn't answer either phone.

He waited two months before he called again. She answered then. It was awkward at first, but she wasn't cold or mean. She laughed at his jokes. She was far away, though, in a way Eddie hadn't expected: distant, like she had no stake anymore in anything they'd said to each other, no claim in anything he thought.

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That was almost two years ago. Since then, he'd dated a couple of other women. There were always a couple of girls hanging around, interested, ever since he'd been in high school. He'd never been a jock or anything, but he knew he had a sort of charm, and he learned how to smile at a girl and look her in the eye and how to joke, how to say things like, "Hiya, Baby Doll." His

mom would tease him when they called, put her hand over the phone and say, "It's for you, Ladies' Man."

Later on, he'd talk to them in bars or if they came into the station or even in the grocery store. He had a particular shy smile he used that worked and he'd ask questions about anything, whatever she had in her hand or her cart, where she bought her car. But lately it seemed like a hell of a lot of work. He hadn't dated anyone for months. When he couldn't stand it anymore, he'd sometimes sleep with a woman he knew from around the corner whose salesman husband was always away, cheating on her in some other city. But lately, when they finished, she'd roll over and start sniffing and once she'd even looked at him and said, "Why does he do this to me? Aren't I good? Aren't I pretty?" Fucking depressing.

Then there was the other depressing thing, the one he didn't think about at all if he could help it. Eddie caught himself pausing like his father used to at the top of the stairs. He saw his father's face some mornings when he splashed his own and looked up quick into the mirror. It wasn't just that he was getting gray or the extra weight, it was the way his face seemed to be melting and sometimes he'd grab under his chin and tug the loose skin hard

like it might snap back into place. Lately too, when he really had to go, he'd just stand there in front of the john . . . and nothing.

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Eddie turned the key in the lock and pushed open the door with his foot. The March wind had kicked up some and a gust made him close his eyes, but he realized that he felt better, less shaky than he had after the robbery. It was a robbery. He hadn't until that moment called it by its name.

He stood in the open door expecting to see the house ransacked, the furniture overturned, the contents of the drawers scattered everywhere. But everything was exactly where he'd left it. Voices from the radio he always left on ricocheted around his kitchen as he stepped inside the house. WGMD, the late night political program—a man's voice said, "This is Mandy from Wisconsin." Then a woman's voice added, "Go ahead, caller, you're on the air." Eddie dropped the newspaper, the mail, and his coat on the chair and locked the door again deliberately.

Eddie usually didn't mind getting home at this hour, when the noises in the adjoining houses had quieted down and he didn't have to listen to his neighbors cooking or fighting. But this quiet seemed weird; he didn't like it. He made himself a sandwich and popped open a beer and grabbed the

remote. He flipped first to the 24 hour news and watched all the way through until the stories looped back around to see if there was any mention of something similar, other gas stations getting robbed, a black Honda and a blonde with a baseball cap. But there was nothing, and it dawned on Eddie that it was probably too common a thing to make the TV news. Finally, he switched to the Weather Channel out of habit and watched the clouds on the Doppler radar building over the west. "It's coming our way," the text under the image warned.

He watched the lights of a car coming down the street slide over the wall beside him. He thought again of the black car as it pulled away and only then realized that he'd never thought to look at the plates. He thought about calling Lois, looked at his watch. Not at 1:40 in the morning, she'd think he was "drinking and dialing." Her ex-husband, the drunk, made a habit of it and she was the first person he'd ever heard say it that way—"drinking and dialing." She had lots of funny ways of saying things, and she'd make him laugh, then she'd laugh along in her raspy smoker's voice, a sort of rattley dark laugh.

Eddie took another bite of sandwich and a long swig of beer and thought awhile about Sunday, about what he'd do. Because he didn't open on

Sundays, he usually got up late, but even when he got up just before noon and ate a big breakfast and sat for an hour or so with the paper, Sundays felt long, and sometimes, there were pockets of the afternoon, “dead spots” he called them, that he couldn’t seem to fill. Especially now, in March. It was easier in the fall when there was football. If the game sold out, he could watch the Eagles on TV or, if it didn’t, he’d sometimes go down to the bar on the corner where they had the game anyway. Vince would put Eddie’s Yuengling on the bar when he saw him coming in and they’d go through the ritual where Eddie’d reminded the bartender that the beer was “made in Pottsville, PA, the oldest brewery in the country,” and Vince would call it “piss water,” “German for urine,” he’d say and go back to wiping the glasses. That was all the conversation they ever had.

Eddie hit the power button and the voices filling the room disappeared. He sat a minute listening to someone in the house next door walking up the stairs. He turned the word “robbed” over in his mind. He would write Lois and tell her, or better, he’d write and say something about getting a drink or cup of coffee or even lunch. What the hell. Just to catch up. He imagined sitting in a little coffee place and telling Lois his story, how she’d lower her eyebrows and say “Oh my God, Eddie,” and he’d make her laugh, make her

see how smart he'd been about the safe and everything, how they'd gotten away with practically nothing.

Eddie climbed the stairs and turned on the desk lamp in the office. Grey metal filing cabinets filled one wall of the small room, these were stuffed with old papers, receipts, deeds, who knew what, stuff of his dad's from after he sold the bar and stuff that he'd never sorted out after his mom died. The desk with the computer on it filled another wall. The room beside the office was the master bedroom where Eddie slept now and down the hall was a third room, the room he'd slept in when he was a kid, but Eddie used it now as a giant closet.

In there he kept all of the furniture of his parents' that he couldn't use: chairs, TV tables, an old chest of drawers, the dartboard that hung in his dad's bar that he kept meaning to hang somewhere in the house. Last of all, he'd shoved in the worn red velvet love seat from his mother's prized living room set. It didn't fit anymore when he bought the recliner, so he lugged it upstairs, wedged it in front of the upright piano that he hadn't touched since he took his last lesson in the fifth grade. When he walked in the door, if he sidestepped the boxes, he could sit in the love seat and survey the mess, lean his head back and roll it on the piano keys.

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Eddie sat at the desk for a long time typing and backspacing, tossing out “Dear” and “Lois” and “Hello, Lois,” before he finally settled on “Howdy, Lois,” as an opening. Funny, he thought, give her a laugh. Then he stared a long time at the white space after the comma, letting his mind drift. Eddie felt restless and exhausted, both, like he needed to do something but didn’t have any energy to do it. He said out loud, “What the hell is wrong with you? You were robbed by a little girl. Go the fuck to bed.” But he didn’t. He kept trying, fingers on the keyboard, the curser like a beating pulse, wanting something from him. “Just checking in” he wrote. That’s what I always say. “Saying hello.” “Seeing how you are.” “Thinking of you.” Nothing sounded right. Fuck. He erased everything, except the “Howdy, Lois” and wrote, “I want to see you.” Then in one long furious bout, “I fucking want to see you. Every day. Do you know that? Every goddamn day I think about you driving by and you never stop even though you could and I keep thinking you might go by on the highway and I think about you at work and your voice and your laugh and I want to tell you a story and I want to watch you listen and I almost died and I just fucking want to see you I want you around I never

meant for it to go the way it did and I never knew how to know how to I never.”

He made his fingers stop, balled them into fists, and pushed his fists into his dry eyes. Then Eddie slid all that he wrote into black and hit delete and wrote instead, “Do you want to meet for coffee?” and hit SEND.

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When he woke up on Sunday morning, Eddie’s eyes felt too big, like he’d been really drinking and not just one beer. He opened them and lay still looking at the light on the ceiling and seeing the pink hoodie as the girl sat back in the passenger side of the car. Then he started telling the story to himself like he would tell it to Lois over coffee.

He’d been robbed, but he was still alive. He would laugh about it, make fun of himself about the little blonde girl, but make Lois see, too, make her understand about the gun, about what it felt like to have a gun pointing at you. How it wasn’t like it was in the movies.

The first thing he did after taking a piss was go back to the office and check the computer. Nothing yet, but it was early, only 9:00. If she had the late shift, she probably wasn’t even up yet. He wandered into the spare room and sat down on the red velvet love seat with his back to the piano. Morning

light came through the blinds in thin bars and made the shapes and shadows of the piled up boxes and furniture look to Eddie like some kind of weird miniature ghost town, where bars of light marked the streets. He rolled his head over the out-of-tune keys a couple of times, running the scale up and down for the pleasure of the press against the back of his skull and the sound.

He thought of where he would take Lois for coffee, and decided on a place downtown. They had marble tables and metal chairs and they even had a place you could sit outside if the weather was nice. When they finished the coffee, if she had time, he'd ask her to go for a walk.

Then Eddie slid into another thought, a surprising one: how nice it might be to have Lois helping out around the station. He could work on cars and she could run the cash register and it might be fun, having someone to talk to about the people who came in. He might even open Sundays and they could go in together, pick up breakfast on the way. Or maybe even stop at a diner and have a real breakfast, pancakes and sausage and eggs, trade sections of the paper. She'd have ideas to brighten up the place, too. The kind of thing his mom used to do when his dad owned the bar.

He looked at the dartboard leaning in the corner, remembered it hanging on the square of cork in the paneled back room. In one of the boxes by his

feet were three framed pictures of roses; he could still see his mother's hands wrapping them in newspapers when they were packing the place up. He flipped open the lid with his foot and read the date on the newspaper, October 13, 1985. Eighteen years ago. *I was twenty-two*, he thought.

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It was almost 11:00 and Eddie was downstairs making a pot of coffee when he heard the computer chirp. He told himself to finish making the coffee, pour a cup, and then go up and read it, probably junk, Viagra or Cialis ad or something. He told himself to be cool. He took the stairs two at a time.

It was her answer, a long message. "Howdy, yourself!" he read, but he felt it right away, as soon as his eyes hit the first sentence, something icy and heavy in the pit of his stomach and he saw again the gas station sliding off the black surface of the car and the key hanging there in the door.

"A lot's happened since last time you checked in." Eddie moved his eyes to the old receipts and flyers taped to the wall above his desk and then forced them back to the screen. "I moved. I'm out west of the city now. I'm happy," she said, "maybe for the first time. I feel like I've found where I really belong."

Eddie let his eyes slide down the rest of the words without reading them, just tripping over other names, names of the people in her life. He imagined them surrounding her, some man and his children, imagined her in the middle of a happy crowd.

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Eddie pulled on his jeans, dug the keys to the truck out of the pocket. He couldn't stay in the house, but he couldn't think where to go. He drove around the city, down Tasker Street and out to Broad. Most stores were closed and the people he saw, all muffled up in dark coats, walked fast. He could see their breath. They were headed to church he guessed or coming back. He followed Broad to where no one was walking, out past the empty stadiums, all the way to where it dead-ended at the river.

He ended up back at the gas station. Sunday morning quiet. Nothing stirring. He sat in the parking lot staring at the spot where the girl had stood and up to the big window, empty now of her reflection. He thought about opening up just for the hell of it. He thought that he might as well earn a couple extra bucks. But instead he turned off the truck and sat with his head pressed against the head rest, and he turned his gaze up to the red Pegasus on the too-small Mobil sign, and then beyond the sign, at the blank highway

that stretched out North and South. There was no one, nothing that recognized him going by, nothing he recognized in any direction he could see.

Anne Colwell has published two books of poems: *Believing Their Shadows* (Word Poetry, 2010) and *Mother's Maiden Name* (Word Poetry, 2013). She writes poetry and fiction and won the 2013 Emerging Artist in Fiction Award for her novel, *Holy Day*.