

Under the Faultline

Philip White

The night before, the earth had jolted us,
A ripple in our sleep till Dad called it
A quake and brought to life the massive plates
Beneath us gnashing the ages. It was

Christmas, 1969, night, snowing.
Tensed over the wheel, he steered us under
The faultline on the icy highway home. Mom
Sank into herself beside him, cradling

Diana, and sang one last lullaby from the time
When God was a child in the world. In back,
Vernon pressed his fist against the window
In fetus-shape, touched his finger five times

Above it, made footprints of miraculous
Accuracy on the glass. Half singing
With Mother, half remembering other years,
I watched him. What was it we sang? Past

Springville the road gouged the hill, a black maw
Slavering ice. Lurid in taillights the world
Reeled past as we watched through prints a child
Had made on a pane clouded by our own breath.