

## Atlanta to Salt Lake

*Elizabeth Garcia*

*(for Sally)*

Prose will not capture some people, the way  
they drift. You can only see them dragging  
their furniture through Wyoming night,  
down a dark throat of road, the ice  
clear and slick. We stopped to sleep in a solitary  
town: Rawlins, Wyoming. Ahead:

a slow hundred miles of snow. (Things ahead  
are always murky, but we go anyway,  
forward.) Oklahoma was first, the solitary  
landscape scarred with arthritic trees, as if dragged  
up by their bones. We stopped only twice,  
once at a motel with “crap” on the walls, and all night

she couldn't sleep, fearing what other nights  
("hookers and pimps") had left in the sheets. And still ahead  
of us, Nebraska flats and the Wyoming ice  
a vast white cliché. It wasn't the way  
I expected, but an easier slope for dragging  
that U-haul than I-25. Just solitary.

Only a semi every few miles. We played laptop solitaire by turns—her black skirt in the window shading her like night, blocking the sun, while my toes went numb—dragging the load away from failed relationships, hoping ahead for clarity, like Thelma and Louise. But that’s not the way it works. Still, we ate at that truck stop the night before. Ice

shrapneled our faces; her dad phoned to warn us of icy roads that could lead to cliffs and a solitary death where our car might “blow up. That would suck.” His way of cheering her up—and it worked. That night we laughed through the rattlesnake backscratchers, Dead Head T-shirts, Jesus figures, stuffed pigs dressed in camo, dragging

ourselves to warm beds in a decent motel. Then that dragging day through whitewash, WY, horizons of ice, to Rock Springs, shouts, and a Pizza Hut buffet. Ahead was Utah, final destination for her solitary path without men, though every night she would think of the same one. But that’s the way

it works—in circles. The way she came dragging back home, still obscured by night, months later, the ice still thick inside. More solitary. Less looking ahead.