

## The Chase

BAR-B-Q signs beckon  
and I enter places that greet  
me with signs that read off  
the towns' populations: 367, 482, 854.  
With dirt as dark as your moods cresting  
north and south, I drive  
the solitary miles with no escape  
from your face.

I pass a worn-down building that says  
it's *America's Only Salt House* and I picture  
a girl, sheltered  
under an umbrella, trailing  
white crystals into mud puddles the color  
of cows being milked  
on a slow-moving summer day.

Cut-rate liquor stores tempt me to quench  
the dryness and I think  
of how far apart  
we've become. Handmade quilts hang  
on lines strung  
between trees and I envy  
women who have the time to quietly stitch, waiting  
for the dogwood to bloom.

