

DARYL SNEATH

FALL, 1991 (FROM ALL THINGS DEEP DOWN)

This boy (me), about to leave home & his father shakes his hand,
the boxy old Ford packed to the hilt

It'll get you where you're going, says the father,
a hand on the hood & a nod

This boy (me) climbs in & palms the sideview,
heart hammering with a feeling I cannot name

Few words pass between us, the laconic gene deep
& rising through the generations

I turn the key but the engine won't go & in my gut that queasy feeling
of unwanted but wanted delay

Nothing left but the going & some unforeseen force (the god
of meaning) muttering through gritted teeth: *Hang on . . . hang on*

Eventually the *whir-whir-whirring* catches a low rumble
& the gas wends its way like blood

This boy (me) pulls away from the curb
& in the sideview watches the father fade

It is the kind of leaving (to note)
that happens only once

Later my father clears the plates, the two empty bottles,
the tail of the batch we brewed that spring

Not that we saved them—no time for sentiment
(he'd say) for men like us, which makes me think

If you could rub a heart the way you can a headstone
the words on my father's might go something like this:

*all things deep down come & go without saying
& so they should*