

Hudsonville MI 1956

La Dispute

There are bridges over rivers
There are moments of collapse
There are drivers with their feet on the glass
You can kick but you can't get out
There is history in the rooms of the house

After dinner
Do the dishes
Mother hums
The coffeemaker hisses on the stove
The steam a crescendo
The radio emergency bulletins and
Everywhere wind

You took the train down to Terra Haute, Indiana
Visit family, your childhood home
Give your mother her grandkid and father a kiss
Put your luggage in your bedroom in the kitchen sit
With your husband still up in Hudsonville
Until the weekend when his shift ends at the furniture mill
Running water for the dishes and the coffee on the stove
Heard a warning from the corner on the radio
And the glass starts to rattle in the window frames

So you went underground
Took the staircase down
To the cellar full of hunting equipment
Held your baby in your arms
Read the labels on mason jars
Try not to think about your husband in Michigan

Stay calm
Keep the radio loud
Take care
Wind howls
Father piles blankets in the corner by the furnace
Mother lights candles
It's a miracle the baby doesn't cry

Back home doing yard work outside
Husband being stubborn under dark skies
Saw the fence by the neighbor's shed split
Saw the kitchen windows start to bend in

So you went down to the back steps then to the basement
There were bookshelf plans on the workbench
And a flashlight shining bright all night try not to think about your son and
your wife
And the lightning that scattered the night sky
And the wind bursts that tore up the power lines
At the workbench in the basement
Where you sat and tried to wait out the night
You called for three straight days
Still with your family back home
Up in Hudsonville the worst of the storms touched ground
And the phone lines were down
Turn the radio up

There's a woman who got thrown from her car into a barbed wire fence
She was 6-months pregnant
Both her and the baby lived
You tried but the line or...

I remember those nights
I couldn't get through to you when quiet storms came rattled the window pane
s
Couldn't keep a thing the same way when the storm blew in and the furniture
rearranged
I can see lightning there and a funnel cloud
And her mother said: 'I swear I saw lightning in your eyes
When that call got through to the other side.'

Stay calm
Keep the radio loud
Stay down
There are bridges over rivers
Sirens in the distant
Wind howls
Keep down
Then
After dinner do the dishes
Mother hums
Wires snap
Metal gets twisted
There's the rattle of the window glass
Bending in
Take the children down
Terra Haute
Coffee
Thanksgiving
Stay calm
Keep down
At the workbench
Stay
And the coffeemaker hisses
Stay calm
Keep down
Turn the radio
There are
There are moments of collapse