

He said come-on,

and we jumped
into his Toyota Tacoma
pick-up that Sunday morning
after all the bars in town closed down. *Hunger,*
he said, the truck pulling center so that it looked
as if we were unzipping the highway as we drove,
some song of sex and sadness on the radio,
It's the only thing that keeps us moving.
That was the summer I first moved to Las Cruces,
city of sand and Spanish slang. It was the year
I tried, despite my Ohionness, to make enchiladas
and failed miserably. It was the year I forgot
to watch the meteor shower, and my best friend Jim tried,
three times, to kill himself, before moving away.
It was three a.m. and we drove through Texas Texas Texas
through tumbleweed, through dust storms, rainstorms
we could see coming miles away and towns
I don't even know the names of. *If we keep going,* he said,
we could make it all the way to Alabama or Arkansas,
to the beginning of the alphabet where they love
the language so much they hold the words in their mouths
a little longer before letting them go. I wanted so much
to be the word underneath his tongue. I turned
to the map of his bloodshot eyes, but could not
figure out where we were headed from there.
We looked to the thick, tortilla moon folded
above us. We howled, hungered for beauty,
sand stuck in our teeth. And the old Chevy,
which we were following too closely,
with its broken tail-light. The left blinker pulsing
like a heartbeat, cracked and hanging,
barely holding on.

-Amy Ash