a fearful carnality

today the clouds are aesthetic
white & thin, elegant &
optimistic yet dissolve
into sun in a fearful
carnality you walking or
driving under them as if you
were important your eyes
gorged the sun in that high-lit
scam dressing you down
lashing you to the day
sun-lashed back forty lashes
if you please to bring the
dead to light
billy & anne kitty & cam
the light so thick
by midday death
was in decay
lost and found

lost on this road
we know like the back of our hand
under clouds that cannot hold still
can hold no shape at all
of course we are expected
the scotch waiting in the cupboard hall
but nobody knows where we are
on the highway like any other
in the car that’s any car
on some wave or other on our way
to the old port of call
my road

this is my road
no one else wants it
the clouds over my road
are first-rate clouds
the fields by my road
are Olympic-sized fields
and I'm on the old way
to discover the exact feeling
of driving in the sweet spring
on the great plains
the road free of language
the signs sparse
life thin
cars fast
the high sun
in passing gear
on my road

that runs and
runs
the first day

In the beginning there was delay
In the beginning rain was already falling
In the beginning the cell phone worked overtime
In the beginning the last wash was done
the last flowers planted
In the beginning the travelling bags
overflowed with anticipation
and the dog left home in the company of a girl
worth wagging her tail over
In the beginning the house resumed its silence
In the beginning the van groaned
the baby pushed all the buttons
and the clock quit
In the beginning the rain clouds came in layers
already in the coastal weather
we were travelling to
In the beginning the fields stretched forever
and the kids played pick-a-number
In the beginning the black highway
drew us onward
In the beginning we were our destination
In the middle a patch of blue sky appeared
We were all reassured
In the middle he saw the past
the Scamp the Dart the Rambler the Chevrolet
His eyes were the same
They saw what was there
The highways were wider smoother
In the middle the van
does not break down
in the rubber-tire world
In the middle he thought
of whiskey at the terminus
He thought no further ahead than that
In the middle the kids
ran round the park in Vegreville
and invented happiness
In the middle the sun came out
He was sunloving and mindnumb
now time the only time
just like last time
In the middle the sun
rambled all over the place
and they sang Blue Skies
In the middle the baby yelled “cows cows”
and became the cowboy
In the middle he wanted that other time
He wanted that other time
the blue Chevrolet just before
death entered the world
Oh he wanted that other time
Today he wanted today
already lonely for today
and our vanguard group of seven
in the beginning the middle and the end

In the end they made four correct turns
In the end they sat on the deck
in the full sun
Now only the earth moved
In the end the barbecue worked on their behalf
In the end they drove for more beer
The evening was long at the end of June
In the end the clouds massed, ran, thinned,
grew ramparts, washboards, were white,
were grey, were yellow with sundown,
streaked with lightning, poured rain
In the end the cards appeared
In the end the television captured the children
In the end our eyes collapsed and we dreamt
travelling invisible roads
At the end of the first day
where are we going next year?

bad highway out of Richdale
makes Saskatchewan drivers
feel right at home

the Hanna escarpment says
the days of the prairie
are numbered
the valley of the Red Deer
is at hand
clouds in our heaven cool
with mountain air
we surround our old friend
on two sides
and we are where we
were meant to be

Graham, give me my pillow.
It’s a chicken.
Give me my chicken.
It’s a turkey.
Graham!
You have to pay fifteen, thirty,
eighty thousand dollars.
Booger brain.
You’re a barney.
You’re a guinea pig.
I’m hungry.
Where are we going next year?
to the tax man

64/

rolling down the railroad line
a mile-long container train
saving all that gasoline
spent on the four-lane highway
by trucks, cars, and us today
if I write enough to mean
we’ll deduct the gasoline
don’t need a regular metre
to deduct another litre
but hell if I write enough
I’ll take the motel cost off
hey, hey, this land is our land
travelling on the tax man
journey man

I am a journey man
on the low road high road
the flags of the clouds
blowing upstream all a-flutter
my heart the journey man
on the known roads
fresh this morning as
new-baked sun
you dream the poem

around the corner the perfect
valley
the farmhouse with a silver roof
burning
the easy highway the sun
on your leg
the highway is the narrative cutting through
the chaos of trees
five days on the road in your own
home
each highway a number each curve
nameless
to Kamloops or Cache Creek or the legendary
Yakk
going the speed limit plus
five
in a meeting in a basement room one window only
you dream the poem of car
and road
tough terrain

in the new town
on the wrong road
the women shopping
the sky lowering a woman
with white breasts drives
off in a four-wheel the day
waiting for her on the edge
of age let the story begin
the story of giving up
smoking or beating cancer
or the story of love which
carries her away like
a ferocious four-wheel
in tough terrain
mind riding

in the room and travelling too
you look me in the eye and
see nothing at all
this random mind riding
on highways of no man’s devising
no man can map mind
which has itself forgotten
where it is  so wandering it is
so absent  as if all walls
were open road  the eye
closed shall go
where it will
Blue River

“You’re so old
you’ll forget
where you come from.”

Nope.
I come from youth.

“You’re so old
you’ll forget
where you’re going to.”

I’m going to Blue River
by brown cows and green trees
rock face and fast river.