

Retribution

Cat's eyes in his headlights,
road and more road ahead,
in the rearview the unsightly
things he did and said.

Lies sworn on bibles,
truths he should have told,
all ready to overtake him;
too many to catalogue.

He pressed the accelerator
to leave those spirits behind
but they went even faster,
as if reading his mind.

He looked for a fast exit
but all had no entry signs
as if there was no escape
from truth, not this time.

Suddenly he switched tactics,
slamming his foot on the brakes;
he'd get it over and done with,
face what he had to take.

All were invisibly there—
the blackest of nights, him,
his guilt and his fear;
no ghost, jumby nor goblin.

He jumped in and screeched away,
thinking he'd left what he'd left
there under the empty sky.
What happened next was felt:

behind him in the back seat,
making the temperature drop
in the car to below nought,
something that made him stop,

not the car, but his breath
and turn, not just his head,
but his whole body around
in the driving seat.

How long he kept going
he doesn't know. When he spun
off the road, he doesn't know.
How he got here, he doesn't know.

*"The car you were in
is for those who have sinned.
You used other's lives
like rubbish bins.*

*Too many loved you,
trusted and depended on you.
You turned on them
like you would an enemy.*

*You had to take that drive
to keep you and them alive.
You were dangerously near
where death's the overseer.*

*Not just would you have died
(otherwise we'd have let you)
but the children, the lovers,
all the people whose lives*

*you've trampled but who'd pine
for you all the same,
they're why we intervened.
They'd not miss your crimes,*

*but you they can't do
without; luckily no statute
lists what you've done,
or you'd be electrocuted."*

The voice faded leaving a stench
the way sin might smell,
a carcass or burning flesh
and a taste of brakes on metal.

Now he's always in cars
journeying to the point
when he faced backwards,
unable to do anything;

He looks on and contracts.
He can rely on that start-
-ling voice, that impact
without sound and stars.

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