

Reading

“Transubstantiation”¹ by Molly McCully Brown

It’s the middle of the night. I’m just a little loose on beer, and blues,
and battered air, and all the ways this nowhere looks like home:
the fields and boarded houses dead with summer, the **filling station**² rowdy
with the rumor of another place. Cattle pace the distance between road
and gloaming, inexplicably awake. And then, the bathtubs littered in the pasture,
for sale or **salvage**³, or some secret labor stranger than I know. How does it work,
again, the **alchemy**⁴ that shapes them briefly into boats, and then the bones
of great **felled**⁵ beasts, and once more into **keening**⁶ copper bells, before
I even blink? Half a mile out, the city builds back up along the margin.
Country songs cut in and out of static on the radio. Lord, most of what I love
mistakes itself for nothing.

¹ **Transubstantiation:** theological concept within Roman Catholicism describing the change that occurs during the sacrament of the Eucharist, where the bread and wine used in the sacrament are believed to become the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

² **Filling station:** gas station.

³ **Salvage:** rescue, restore.

⁴ **Alchemy:** medieval practice of attempting to transform metal into gold; transmutation.

⁵ **Felled:** knock down.

⁶ **Keening:** high-pitched sound, often related to the expression of grief or sorrow.

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