

Patricia Caspers

**Portrait of God as a Bottle of Urine in a Ditch beside  
Applegate Frontage Road**

I began as a blessing of rain that watered the apricot tree,  
or gathered to circle the chambers of a beast's heart, or perhaps  
was gathered to quench the thirst of a milking cow, sweeten the cream  
of the coffee you sip while flipping between stations  
in the sedan, the pickup, the semi that carries you home, to work  
on the mountain, to play in its dearth of snow, or carries you farther  
east, away from the life you were promised, or the life you promised  
another. I was separated from myself in the red embryo, island pillow  
of the kidneys, as you separate yourself from where you have been,  
cleave toxins, the faceless drivers in the cars beside you in the night,  
separate from your own body, the weight of you there in the seat,  
the surety of the belt pressed against your chest, as you fiddle  
with the dials to heat the air that warms your legs, colder  
with elevation. The length of the urethra is the motorway I travel,  
as you steer this highway, perhaps a little too fast, and I am you,  
always filling, always asking that you stop and notice, pause  
for this moment, and any other night you would rest for this ritual  
of letting go, but time is not itself lately, and the glass bottle beside you  
is empty, and isn't it beautiful how golden we are, there,  
in the littered gully, below the branches of the madrone tree,  
where we glitter in passing headlights—as though the moon  
is not enough—home now, where only the most curious coyote  
will find us.