

***Steven Knepper***

**Doubts**

He overheard some joke about a girl  
who wrote her own cell number in the stall,  
not sure he'd caught the name,  
not sure he hadn't either.

What seemed a dripping sink the day before,  
the kind of thing you notice then ignore —  
the shoulders hunched away from him in bed,  
the cool blue smile into the sheltered screen,  
the ladies' nights and weekend-long spa stays,  
the V-necks, shorter skirts, and higher heels —  
became a busted pipe, a drowning flood.

So he switched shifts and parked behind her Nissan  
in a pole-lit gravel lot where beer signs flicker,  
bass pulses through gray logs.

He thought about the night  
before their graduation when they climbed  
the steel steps of the observation tower,  
a sleeping bag in tow, to watch the sun  
ignite the ridge in iridescent blaze,  
to drink pink wine they'd stolen from her dad,  
to listen to spring peepers' constant song.

At some point they woke up inside a fog,  
ephemeral wisps and swirls that formed, dissolved,  
clung to their skin as they made love inside  
a cloud illumined by a hidden source.  
The metal rails and skin and mist all glowed.  
They fell asleep again without a word.

Up there,  
the world had opened on infinity.  
Down here,  
it has contracted to this roadhouse door.

He cannot bring himself to open it.