

## Winter on La Veta Pass

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*Craig Crist-Evans*

*for Jim Evans*

The road is clear to La Veta,  
then mile by mile worse until  
I can't go up, I can't go back.  
Slipping where the road's black ice,  
the truck spins out and slides,  
wipers slapping crazy  
at the crusted slush, night  
coming down its steep sluice.  
Anythiing could be the truth.  
There are stories where you are my father,  
and stories where we've never met.  
There are nights like this:  
each nerve's slick surface, words  
spinning out of control. And nights  
I remember lying in the grass  
behind our house in Boardman,  
you pointing to the stars,  
pitching a tent at Wildwood Lake  
by the frail glow of flashlights,  
or bending in the woods above the body  
of a rabbit, giving me the knife and saying,  
"Go in here and cut all the way back."  
I need to talk about this.  
I need for you to know how far  
I've driven to find you here in me,  
staring at the windshield,  
following the edge and seeing  
nothing but the road, black  
with a kind of ice you don't see

until you're on it, sliding  
like a terrified boy waiting  
for his father to tell him he loves him,  
pushing through the last stretch home,  
hands knuckle-white against  
the steering wheel, eyes pasted  
to the blank surface of the world.  
The truck hits ice and skids and slams  
against a wall of snow. I don't know  
how long I sit there shaking with fear.  
I don't know if the fear is fear  
of dying, or fear of something else.