

By Anne Holub

Traffic

The rocks we took from Montana are beginning to gray, which always happens when they become dry and then indistinct. I can't tell you which river they came from, though I roll them under my thin shoes with a motion they're used to. I can't make out the markers here, but I can see three men in a circle on the median. They smoke. They wear jackets with mountain names and look like they know where they're going, how long it will take to get there. It's too simple to wonder how many cars make a mile. I should calculate the distance from here to home, figure alternate routes and gas reserves. I should wonder where we left the map, why it didn't seem like something that needed saving. There is too little movement here and I wonder if everyone is playing at something, if they're rolling stones where I can't see. I get out of the car and stoop to the road, warm and confused at our stillness, the length of our stay. I kneel and pick at the black tar-stones, peer down the stripe of highway. The men talk of construction and blasting ahead, move their hands like small explosions.