

## POETRY

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### Offerings

*Dayna Patterson*

The way he leaves a banana-mayo sandwich  
on the counter. His special blend  
of applesauce with too much cinnamon  
brims over a white glass bowl.  
The scratchy blue-and-green-car sheets  
left folded on the hide-a-bed.

During your visit,  
he'll take you to the buffet,  
but only between two and four.  
He'll stand in line  
for a cup of water,  
but only if it's free.  
He won't ride the glass-bottom boat,  
but he'll lead you to the spring,  
make odd remarks  
while you gawk at alligators,  
scan seaweed for manatees.

There will be no hugs, no  
*I love you's* when you leave.  
You'll have to scavenge for clues:

The way he rises early to make you  
tofu waffles.  
The way he hoses pollen from your car  
before your 12-hour trip.  
The way he proffers a firm handshake,  
a packet of sandwiches,  
a sack of bruised Red Delicious.