

Traveling the Interstate after  
My Little Brother's Funeral

*Anita Tanner*

We slow.

What is this? Why?

We ride along, our eyes,

weary and broken,

adhere to what is left

of a hayload—

two long trailers loaded

with stout, bulky bales

now blackened, smoldering

just off the road to somewhere.

Wet, red firetrucks and hoses

cross beside the load.

The trailers collapse onto darkened rims—

all tires have melted in the heat.

We roll the windows

for the acrid smell to verify

our eyes, craned at the violent

rupture in the path,

incredulity in eyes and voices

as we ask. By the look of things,

here's destitution.

For miles down we question

cause and effect but cannot

understand.

We imagine the driver's joy  
when heading out that day  
with a farmer's load—

The hope of recompense  
for all expense and sweat  
has come to this.

All along the miles now—we feel  
the rapture of the driver and the farmer,  
then the rupture of the load.

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ANITA TANNER has been writing since 1978. She is the mother of six and the grandmother of seventeen. Reading and writing is akin to breathing for her. She's lived in four states: Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, and Idaho and loves them all. Raised on a small dairy farm in Wyoming, she learned a love of the land, nature, and animals. New ideals and connections light a fire in her. She is passionate about life, working in her yard, reading poetry, and taking daily walks. Her book of poems, *Where Fields Have Been Planted*, was published in 1999.