

Rear View

Like our cows
held by ropes at milking time,
I was distanced on our prairie farm
with the closest neighbor a mile away.

Then one day I got off the school bus
to find a 1941 Chevy Coupe
parked near the farmhouse. Dad paid
\$65, all for me to drive to high school.

The next day I adjusted the rear-view mirror,
watched the red barn and mom's
empty clothesline slowly fade
into the rolling hills north of town.

Through the windshield
I saw new life in the town's water tower,
high school friends, basketball games,
first kiss, college, slipping into adulthood.

Now an old man, I'm back to that mirror:
see grandpa walk the farm, dad's heart attack,
mom's funeral, weddings, kids born,
Navy days, career, beach vacations,
dogs, granddaughter, spouse's death,

and my own release.