

## Going

Watching the son of my friend,  
(a near nephew) drive off,  
his dark eyes full forward,  
a single, swift, glance in the rearview.  
That long, straight nose  
pointed due north, a compass needle.  
Shaggy black curls still, an instant,  
before accelerating onto the road  
and away.

The look on my friend's face,  
an effluence of pride and longing,  
a maelstrom swirling between  
two equally potent polarities,  
a desire to hold,  
the imperative to launch.  
Not unlike the first time  
they met, except now, knees shut,  
standing tall, her wide lips drawn  
into a solid bridge of a smile,  
hand up, eyes balefire bright.

We stand together watching him go,  
the dust from his leaving still  
in the air, forming a cloud  
making it easy to conjure  
all the places he will go.  
Like a photo album  
that has yet to be assembled.  
Picture him in long, khaki shorts,  
hair a tumble, on the rim  
of the Grand Canyon, or more  
likely, atop Annapurna,  
skis in hand, smiling beside . . .  
well that part is a bit blurry.

But it is easy enough to see him  
raising a dark eyebrow in a lab,  
and in line, capped and gowned,  
or more casually attired  
before monuments and wonders,  
towers, amphitheatres, walls, mountains,  
gardens, old cities, and brand new.  
His whole life before him,  
like that road he is driving on.

Looking over, plumbing  
my friend's lake blue eyes  
I can see my own  
face and future reflected,  
and even anticipate standing  
and watching another car  
pull out and away,  
while still holding onto  
the very temporary comfort  
of my own son, still here,  
for just a bit longer.

— Melissa Mishcon