

Coming Home

by Cammie Corlas Quinn

Seventy-year-old bones rise from a chair
To meet my forty-year-old needs.
“Coffee? Need some coffee?”
“I can get it, Dad.”
But his bones move faster than my laziness.

He’s awake hours before my head leaves the pillow,
Outside checking my car in the dew of dawn.
Hood up, dipstick drawn, oily rag hanging from his pocket.
“Got enough gas to get back?” he asks too many times.
“I got gas.”
“Sure you got enough gas?”
“I got gas.”

Peddler of garden-grown tomatoes and pearl-white onions,
Shedding husks in a brown paper sack, deposited in my back seat.
Treasures from a simple man with decades of soil under fingernails
That clacked a hoe in the early years when we were young and money was tight
And we never knew we were poor, back then.



Taken for granted half the time, nothing new to say,
Same old stories repeated nine times out of ten,
Same Chevy pickup advertisement pushed under my nose,
Creased four ways, saved by a man who never bought a new truck in his life.

No one ever gave him a medal
Cause you don’t give medals to men with soft hearts who make no mark
And men who have precious little to say;
Worked fifty years, gardened fifty years, raised six kids, buried now,
Servant of all, lauded by none.

You are my bedrock.

