

Rusted Memories

By Jane Bowers

The new emerging from the old
Holds rusted memories!
I see a car on blocks reminding me of long-gone days,

Decades gone --
 The ghost of a rusty old vehicle,
 Half of it lost, inoperable,
 Transports me to summer nights
 At a Dairy Queen
 In the suburbs

Girls not yet old enough to drive
 Gather and gossip,
 Strut and slurp the soft-serve ice cream.

Back then, before the highways invited malls,
 Meadows bloomed on the verges
 The road was slow and exciting.

Teenagers eagerly awaited their road tests.
 Once licensed, boys offer rides to girls
 Not yet old enough to drive.

Recent drivers come to the parking lot
 And offer jaunts to reservoirs
 Or parking lots on Palisades Parkway
 Or secret spots by water towers.

I ride.
 Ah, the sweet scent of fresh grown grass!
 I see a doe feeding in the twilight
 The road is new, the world is new,
 The night is silent.

My wandering attention turns back
 To see a sleek white vehicle emerge.
 All gleam and purpose,
 Passing through memory
 To purposeful destinations.

Around it, a damaged world.

A dying cactus instead of a meadow,

Rust.

Even the door to the trunk of the ghost car is gone.

A feeble jack holds the car aloft.

In the shiny car, a driver sits,

His legs hold him distanced from the pedals,

With tire and hubcap full and strong.

He can't have shared the joy I recall.