

## **MISSED CALL**

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*Second Place, Poetry*

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When my father doesn't call  
He says  
I'm sorry for a lot of things.  
For the little things that have to be my fault  
And for the big things  
That might be.  
For the eating  
And the not  
For the faces of men, anonymous, unloving  
That never fill the space I carved.  
For your obsession with  
The backs of heads  
For your comfort in leaving  
For your fear of anyone  
Who would want to stay.

When my father doesn't call  
He says  
I've got a nice place in the country now  
Not too far from the river  
Not too far from the town where you were born  
I've got pictures of myself in a box here  
And even if I don't have pictures of you  
You are there—in my face, in my eyes  
(In my heart).

When my father doesn't call  
He says  
One of these days  
We could get a bite to eat in the greasy spoon down the way  
No mayo, extra tomato  
I'll eat the sliced pickles you pull off your sandwich  
I'll break my cookie in half  
Extend it across the shortest distance  
We've ever had between us  
Any you can finish it once  
You've already eaten yours  
Because you got your sweet tooth from me.

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Any when my father doesn't call  
He says  
Besides all that, come  
To the last house on the street  
Come out to my place in the country  
Not far from the river  
Not far from the town where you were born  
And stay for awhile.  
Find yourself in the box  
Find yourself in my face, in my eyes,  
In my heart.