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Judith Boogaart *When I Said Good-Bye*

I noticed the strangest things  
The night I told you good-bye.  
It was raining, the sky spitting  
Large scattered drops down on us.  
You didn't put the wipers on at first,  
So in the twilight at 55 miles per hour  
I saw the raindrops like transparent  
Round silver bugs chase each other  
Up the windshield of your '67 Ford  
And hop up onto its roof.

I noticed the silence, of course.  
Not that you ever talked a lot,  
But when we used to walk hand in hand  
On the beach, the silence was comfortable.

We caught up to a train rumbling along  
The tracks which paralleled the highway,  
And it seemed the trees flew past  
Between car and train while  
Both stood still—another illusion  
On this strange night, like thinking  
It would be easy to leave you,  
To never again see your boyish face  
Framed with thick black hair  
Or the smile in your blue eyes.

Turning at the crossroads, we waited  
For the train, and I counted 72 cars,  
Wheels baddock-badooming over the tracks  
In time to the heavy thud of my heart.  
I wondered how to tell you,  
When you'd come all this way,  
And felt as if I were swallowing whole eggs  
As I tried to get the words out.

Strange, then, that I didn't notice  
How much I was hurting, too, or know  
That years later I would still remember  
Your stricken eyes and trembling lips  
And wonder if you hated me—  
Or never thought of me at all.