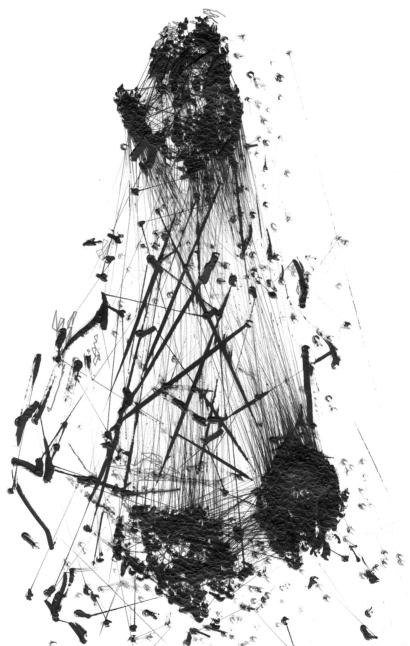
## MATTHEW BUCKLEY SMITH

## MIDLIFE



WINNER OF THE RICHARD WILBUR POETRY AWARD

## The Best

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You're wrong, she said, if you think I don't recall the drive we made at the end, from Hartwell to Jasper, across that summer's last long weekend, fall a sobering whisper. When did we start to fool ourselves out loud? You went first, but I don't hold it against you. You were so handsome then, and I was so proud, though I never convinced you. A little farther on was all I wanted. in the white compact, humming some aimless song. I sold it last year. My fiancé said it was haunted, and he wasn't wrong. He's shorter than you, and better with his hands, and better. You wouldn't like him, but he might still like you. His ex was a beauty, I hear, though I never met her, or wanted to.

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I'm almost glad things went the way they did the last drive west, the last fuck by the water, the last big lie, the best. Now I hear you have a kid, a beauty, a daughter.

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