

## Barry Dempster

### Get Lost

I'm ironing my cool shirt,  
the black one with sleek ivory stripes,  
when my right wrist begins to shake.  
Just a slip and I'd be scalded,  
but that's not it, the crisis  
is in amongst the muddled nerves,  
hormones flashing at tear ducts  
like toy ambulances. What's this  
all about? The alarm clock of loss  
went off before 6, surely I've  
accrued some stealth, some heft, since then.  
But loss it is, one hair too many  
blown from my head, one great idea  
sledding for a dark-ice end, one  
word left dangling at the slam of  
every sentence. It's not the done  
deals that palsy me, the buried  
parents, the scraps of youth, the old  
collection of Beatles' cards  
that vanished into someone else's  
greed. No, the old griefs are slowly  
arching into figurines, dust  
collectors. It's this very moment  
that's waving out, stirring up  
distances too wide to cost, too  
willful to calm. Bon voyage, good  
riddance, get lost. My wedding ring  
flies off my finger, an instant  
UFO. Your love for me  
spins inside out, a shrug of broken  
bones. Someone not even born yet  
shouts *No!*, my open mouth a begging  
bowl. Shakes intensifying into  
shivers, the iron hissing  
in my hand, my shirt looking flat  
and skinned. I'll lose this shirt one day,  
time's dependable fray, which makes  
me love it just a little less.  
I'll lose the stripes, the pearly buttons,  
the way the collar likes to strut.  
Lose the energy, the hot cool,  
the way the cotton adds my nakedness  
to its list of accomplishments.