On The Lam

Hannah Pritchard

Driving to Topeka, profession
of love and boredom
settles in irrigation ditches,
words barred in the confines of the plains.

Uncle pours his anger
into the ash cakes buried beneath the embers,
familiar exploration of resentment
and its combustible properties, stirring
coals with cleaver, girlfriend with promise
of breaking out. Toil

chimes up through the smoke,
Uncle unsure whether to buy gas
or Pall Malls, shrugging
oil off his shoulders like a pelican,
beak filled with proclamations
and anti-government agenda.

What are you doing here?
Uncle doesn’t ask.

Three days later,
August digs its wheels in the mud—
Uncle’s brain is uninsured calculator.
Uncle shuffles cards, shuffles feet.
Uncle, dipped in a river of soot,
digs hands into pockets
and asks for a ride.