

On Confessionalism

After John Murillo's poem of the same name

Not unconscious, but waking still,
with my hands on a wheel, and the wheel
in a car, and the car in a mess
in the way of the road. Autumn of '25,
and I'm strapped into a wrecked Toyota Yaris,
bisecting lane lines, totally perpendicular,
staring up into the wide eyes of a passerby,
her open mouth also staring,
the other driver's engine idling behind me,
a slow roaring fading in my ears only to rage
in his like the sunrise that morning.

All this to say, someone's in trouble.
And this man with his head in his hands--
this man who, like me, is really little
more than a child-- may or may not
have something to do with it.
May or may not have chanced a gap
one car too short and smashed it broadside,
say, and spun it 180 degrees. And why
not say it: I loved that car. And she,
me. Bright blue and glossy as a teardrop,
took me anywhere, up until then,
and still, for two days after. And, therefore,
I went for broke. Blacked out

and woke having told the cop everything,
told of a teen driving to school
and the grown man who didn't check
and hit her. Blacked out and woke,
reporting a car, the car across the road,
a man, who was really a child,
in the car with his head in his hands. And because
I loved my car, I actually paused
before I collected the insurance money, later,
when the debris was long cleared,
to read the report, then panicked--
saw that car was his son's, and took him only here,
that he had no license, insurance, or papers
and that it was lisplless Spanish he spoke
to the cop writing down his name.

A car and a son of his body, iron from blood,
and a man, who was really a child,
with his life in the hands
of a cop on the side of the road.

Day of smashed mirrors and crumpled
blue metal. Day of taken chances,
and chances taken away. Day nobody died,
so why no Hallelujah? No Amen
or Glory be? Hot enough morning
to make a grown man weep, morning
when everything, or only something,
changed forever. The tall cop grunted, roaring

faded, my conscience whispered in the trees.

I left, then lost heartache by lunch,

somewhere between his life and mine.

Left the heartache in the glass shards,

but never got around to calling out his name.