

Nebraska

Matt Mason

1

Springsteen calls the album “Nebraska”
 even though it’s mostly Jersey.
 Lot of nighttime, though,
 lot of highway,
 could
 all look the same,
 could
 all sound alike,
 driver’s side window down,
 air dragging a sleeve up your shoulder
 as your hand moves like a bird,
 up and down
 over the long, yellow line.

2

I would’ve tried out
 for a bit part in Alexander Payne’s movie
 but couldn’t get off work
 and drive to Norfolk;
 they’d sent some pages
 with lines for a cousin
 I thought I could play,
 but, when you see the finished cut,
 it’s obvious
 I’d have stuck out like a tourist
 in the movie
 named after my home.

3

Mine’s not acoustic guitar black and white.
 Mine has ukulele and tuba.
 Mine pops in emerald, vermillion and blue,
 Stratocaster, surf guitar, Casio keyboard,
 violet, turquoise, silver and rust.

You get me, right?

I could make lists till the cow metaphors come home.
 Yes, it’d swing around to harmonica, grey,
 a cheap piece of strung timber, too,
 eventually;

but it’s all here in symphonies,
 in spectrums,
 in choruses,
 in color.

4

There’s a story:
 the reporter, Ninette, gets a call in the newsroom,
 tired at first, but the questions are good
 so she spends time remembering,
 finding what details from an old murder
 she still has filed in her fingers.

After a bit, she puts the phone down, click,
 stands up and asks these folks
 writing Husker football and bridge closings,
*This gentleman I was just speaking to, has anyone ever heard of
 a Bruce Springsteen?*

Turns out
 they have.

5

So listen.
 So look out.
 I enter this

as evidence:
 no matter what
 those other guys said,

it all
 went down
 like this.