

# Piano

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The garbage truck exhales up the rancid street  
The smell stays for a visit on the hot morning porch  
I'm sitting at the piano watching shadows darken  
Follow the black keys into the universe of vibration  
My grandpa used to hide his cans of beer inside  
You could crouch beneath while he played  
His foot a circus animal pouncing the brass pedal  
I'm certain I've told you the story of one day long ago  
A hulking beast sagged the back of my uncle's truck  
Eighty-eight yellow teeth smiled with predator menace  
Do you know how it feels to hide what you love the most  
Dripping sweat onto the strings and felted hammers  
This machine knows me invites me to come inside  
I slide the secret door open and squeeze behind the wires  
I can't believe it's taken me this long to realize  
I belong here I stroke the steel cranks and gears  
One day his wife died from a medley of cancers  
One day he blacked out in his car at a red light  
Inside the piano I climb down a fire escape ladder  
We're poking for bottles and cans in the alley  
Grubbing for sidewalk change looking for a friend  
He plays sad songs just like this one in C major  
For some reason he's singing For Sentimental Reasons  
We're all of us born of peasant stock by now  
All of us have learned to read and write I remember  
Him playing stride piano in the back of the truck  
It feels truer than truth that I'm there with him  
Laughing as it rumbles down the sunny street