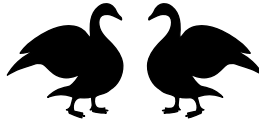


STEALTH



This is the story of how my brother's car was stolen from our parents' driveway by two bored kids while my parents were dead asleep to the world, to the sound of the doorbell and loud knock-knock. (Now it's a joke.) And when no one comes, those boys don't enter, thank God, like those ex-cons in Connecticut, because that's the kind of thing you imagine, lying in bed with almost nothing on and nothing but cornfields for miles around to hear your panicked call. But it's never like you imagine it; when they finally do come, they knock on the door like somebody lost or hungry or alone, like somebody with a story ready in case the door opens—but it doesn't, thank God, so they go around to the side drive where the '91 Stealth sits and smolders in farm-heat, endangered (now extinct) little green gelding washed and waxed with the doors unlocked and the key tucked in the ignition. It was made for this. They ease in, one in back, two in front, before they change their minds. Fourth gear and gaining down Phillip Road to Brown's promise of a flat stretch, nothing but corn for miles around to hear their victory calls. Now let's see what this son of a bitch can do. And they do and they do, and hot damn, it's good to exhaust a limit, to use it all up, burn it out and through. And finally spin out in the soft give of plowed ground, walk to another door—*car trouble*—and ask the one who comes, a little flushed with worry and a day's work, to use the phone. I imagine her sinking into bed, into sleep that's dreamless, full and warm as blood.