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# DRIVING THROUGH THE NIGHT TO GET HOME

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**Dave Malone**

Near a forest grove  
on the two-lane,  
I come to a full stop.

My car splits the small  
deer herd—lithe bodies,  
big eyes—on respective sides  
of the white-lined highway.

In the headlamp and waxing  
crescent light, we stare  
at each other for a few moments,  
wondering what just happened.

Such strange night noise approaching  
then halting to a hum during an evening  
forage for crimson clover and poke greens.  
I am less inquisitive than they though

my satchel flew from front seat  
to floor in an instant. I drove slowly  
for them, for me, for this small prayer  
in the field, at this table, lit by the stars.

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# FIRST SNOW AT THE BODY SHOP

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**Dave Malone**

Few people in town know I'm a writer.  
I like it that way. Their slow, beautiful  
lives are safe from my eye, ink, screen.

But the guys at the body shop know  
and treat me like an honored guest  
when I pull up with a broken fender,

a busted hubcap. On a frenzied Friday  
afternoon, it's a headlight decapitated  
by a cedar limb spear. Even the mayor

shows with his Lincoln Navigator,  
driver door bent on a bender.  
The boys usher him out

into the snowstorm and gather to hear  
about my latest play, how a boxer  
can make do with a tough stepson

at Christmas. How twinkle lights shine  
with the grace of Manny Pacquiao,  
like the season's first snow.

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# BUCKET CALF

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## Dave Malone

I won't think of you embalmed.  
Instead, I'll pretend that your family  
had you cremated, and coils  
of dark smoke rose up,

mixed with cirrus clouds far above  
the crematorium. Twenty years ago,  
you sat in the last row  
of my composition class.

Your red hair spoke for you,  
a shy girl who kept a secret  
from all of us. You visit me often  
when I'm stopped after work

by the train that rattles  
through the middle of town.  
The iron wheels churn,  
and their wind shakes my little car,

sending me back to raise  
the shuttered windows  
of our classroom, where you  
wrote essays about 4-H and winter.

How you struggled once  
to put a calf down,  
but it was yours to care for,  
and it had to be you.

## Author Biography

Dave Malone spent his early childhood in Riley, Kansas, and later graduated from Olathe North High School. Dave holds degrees from Ottawa University and Indiana State University. In a past life, he taught courses in composition and film. He is the author of eight collections of poetry and enjoys giving readings. He currently lives in West Plains, Missouri. You can find him online at [davemalone.net](http://davemalone.net) or on Instagram @[dave.malone](https://www.instagram.com/dave.malone). Contact him at [davemaloneauthor@gmail.com](mailto:davemaloneauthor@gmail.com).