Does This Happen to Everyone?

Bob De Smith
Dordt College, bob.desmith@dordt.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege

Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation
De Smith, Bob (2015) "Does This Happen to Everyone?," Pro Rege: Vol. 44: No. 2, 5 - 6.
Available at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol44/iss2/3

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the University Publications at Digital Collections @ Dordt. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pro Rege by an authorized administrator of Digital Collections @ Dordt. For more information, please contact ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu.
Robert De Smith

Does this happen to everyone?
You’re driving along,
Left hand at 12 o’clock—

I learned 10 and 2
But practice 12 and zero,
Impervious to the new
Regimen:
no higher than 9 and 3,
Thumbs outside the wheel,
Safe from the airbag’s
Punch to your face.

I’m impervious, I say,
Habit, that faithful mutt,
Winning over information every time.

But does this happen to everyone?
You’re driving along,
Impervious, as I have said,
When you are suddenly
Looking not at the back of your hand
But at his—your father’s.

Where’d all that weathering come from?

They are not really his, of course.
Those I saw last
Too serene,
Plastic, bejeweled,
Crossed in the composure of death.

It made me tap the brakes.

So, not the same, but his still—
Aged, veined, big-knuckled—
And at the right spot on the wheel.

“You looked just like your Dad,”
She says, after I wade back in
From a thigh-deep walk into
Chilly Lake Michigan with my son.
Your hands rise at your side, and
You get on tiptoes to reach the sandbar.

Distance causes distortion, I think.

Or maybe it’s the cap.

No; Yes. It’s me but it’s also him.

Why else am I at that lake
With my own family?
Or driving one-handed,
Alert to the feel of the wheel,
The hum of all whirring parts?

I remember a ride from town to the lake,
Squeezing into a sidecar with my brother,
My Mom and Dad astride the bike.

We tuck low to hide from the wind;
We looked up at his hand on the throttle:
“Faster!”