A Bus

rolls over old highways
and country roads
sighs into a station,
then roars on
past factories and silos
until dusk, a changeover stop.
The passengers stretch and eat.

An older driver clocks in
for the dark shift, speaks
into his hand, listens
for warm voices on his CB.
Strangers lean together,
their words flesh out
the silences of the long ride.
Someone borrows an aspirin.

All night the driver shields
his eyes against the glare
of oncoming brights,
and the riders count windows
scattered like stars
beyond the shoulders.

Waking tomorrow in the depot,
they’ll check their watches
and spread across the city
like a shattered pane of glass.

Jeff Vande Zande