

Evening rhapsody between Madison and Whitewater

by [Jeff Gundy](#) in the [November 30, 2010](#) issue

Too much of anything is better than Milwaukee's Best
when the first snow hits in November and I'm already sick

of winter, when it's stone dark by five, when the country roads
are lettered and empty and I should have obeyed the instructions,

should have turned around, should have done it all right,
every road swerves and twists and with each little town

I have to stop and squint at the atlas, astonished when somehow
I find them all on the map, somehow each turn brings me closer

to the pretty clerk in the low-cut blouse who will hand me
the key card with a smile like the deluxe continental breakfast,

somehow not a single deer pops sudden and solid into my headlights,
and the aching ball joint holds through each and every curve,

and there's room in the ditches for a lot more empties—not that
I'm drinking—and I keep glimpsing water along the road,

glints and shivers of light and the roads curving among them
as I sweep through darkness, and I am never truly lost,

not after the late moon rises in the east like God's thumbnail,
like a medallion of embossed paper torn carefully in half.