

Kansas

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We spend our years as a tale that is told.

—Ps. 90

Joey and I sit in The Prairie Junction.
He scans the menu then orders the “Prairieburg.”
He’s never been here before but it looks worth trying.

A man his friends call Marty just walked in.
Marty pulls up a chair next to Lorne and Rod.
They resemble a comradely flock of ancient birds.

I decide I’m going to order the chicken sandwich.
I haven’t had it before but it looks good too.
I mostly want to know that there is God.

The men have on the clothes they wear to church.
Right after service their wives must have gone back home.
Bill jokes about the football team at KU.

Lorne and Marty laugh as though they mean it.
Shelly the waitress is way too fat but nice.
She’s very young but she’s laughing right along.

There aren’t that many here but they all seem nice.
I remember a passage about the eye of God.
I want it truly to be on the sparrow, the eye.

I privately study the faces around their table.
Anybody would tell you that Lorne’s still handsome.
There’s a winter-wind-creased hawkish look to Rod.

Though he isn't handsome he appears to tell a good tale.
There's something in Marty's expression that appears quite sad.
He looks to me as though something bad has happened.

Maybe it has but I have no way to tell.
His friends are being especially nice to Marty.
They may know the man has something painful to stand.

I don't know anyone here at the Junction but one.
We're not having much luck hunting out here but no matter.
It's good just to be with such a dear chum as Joey.

We swap our own little narratives back and forth.
The men are of an age and so are we.
I don't want them merely cut down like the grass that withers.

They all have been inside their church this morning.
I bet that each has made it a habit to pray.
These men I'm watching believe there's God I believe.

And as for me that's what I want there to be.