

X

Love

GETTING LOST

I'm not proud of it, but I couldn't resist
Bethany, the British woman on my GPS,
who understood I had better things to do
while driving than to think about what
I was doing, and who had the most charming

difficulty with her r's. I went everywhere
with her, making each turn she whispered
with that lisp of hers into my ear as I watched
the man she had made of me on my GPS TV,
a superhero in a blue car taking on the tangle

of roads that tumbled out of the horizon,
until Diane, my wife and former navigator,
who couldn't match Bethany's expertise,
not to mention her modest compliance, began
to resent her. "She says 'rump' instead of 'ramp,'"

Diane remarked as I made another perfect
exit off the thruway, "and that thing she does
with her r's is driving me nuts." It was wonderful
to be the source of conflict between two
women, but then I began to consider how

my destination time in the lower left corner
kept adjusting itself according to my speed,
a small reminder that in the very moment
I was enjoying my triumph over the map,
a computer somewhere that knew everything

was mapping me. I recall a certain period
of melancholy before I returned to my wife,
Bethany and I had been that good together,
I having made so many wrong turns
in my life, she only wanting to help me

make them right. Yet I couldn't stop longing for,
of all things, the fights Diane and I once had
about the simple urgency of finding our way,
and the delicious thought of ending up
beside some forgotten field among cows

on a dwindling road that didn't even exist
on the ragged copy of the known world
she held in her lap. Which was, minus the cows,
just where we were one week after I unplugged
the GPS, and we sat quietly at the roadside,

spent by our argument – she turning to me
with her blue eyes and that old, dear look
of helplessness, I turning off the engine and reaching
out to her because we'd arrived nowhere at last,
the two of us back together again, getting lost.

