

Forgetting To Fill Up In Saskatoon

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We ran on empty for an hour,
three boys in a borrowed car,
miles away from anywhere
but these dead farm towns
without street lamps or oil.

Just burnt out gas stations
and the low moans of cattle
shifting in the dark.

Dry as December, we coasted
all the way home, whispering prayers
and holding our breath as if to lighten
the load till the faint lines of the city
rose at the edge of our view,
like the far off fires of a familiar shore,
and we pulled ourselves in
as weary men, tired of the sea.

Neil Aitken

Neil Aitken was not born in Los Angeles, but elsewhere in Vancouver, British Columbia in 1974. Over the course of his 29 years, he has lived in Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, the United States, and Canada.

The son of two librarians, words accompany him wherever he goes; books fill walls, rooms, and floors; he talks to himself and scribbles things down on the backs of business cards. He adapts an old line from Bulosan, "Canada is in the heart, a great island that lies beyond the horizon of my memory."

