

Timothy Dyson

MISS LENA'S COUNTRY BUFFET

We decided to leave early, north out of Manning
straight up Route 301; we had half a case
of Nut Brown Ale, a hundred hours of blues.
Passing the sharecropper shacks
the beautiful Cadillacs, a sheen of something owned
by men who knew the truth of endless work.
But that day was Easter when the singing at Table Rock AME
soared to heaven like the purple feather
on Teresa Porter's new bonnet.
On the outskirts of Fayetteville, just past the propane and
package goods store, yellow cinderblock eatery
Miss Lena's Country Buffet. You paid your nine dollars
and then, grabbed a tray.
We sat in the back near the biscuits,
our daily bread.



SO-CALLED LIFE

She had grandma's old Ford,
Six hundred dollars she'd put away
After a lot of double shifts at the diner.
A large coffee, two chocolate éclairs
Beautiful blue streak in her hair

It was time to go
To meet her online lover
A pig farmer in northern Idaho.
Her stepmom's bag of sandwiches
And her rescue cat, Jinxed,
Bounced along on rusted shocks
Below the satellites and stars.
It was more than two thousand miles
Just around the corner
From the no-tell motel, light years
Beyond the unwanted touch.
Boise—big and not that noisy—
Seemed to emit hopeful glow
As she turned north
Headed towards the Salmon River
Not expecting much.