**Keeping Sunrise**

Annette Sisson

4:30 a.m. Your finger pecked, rapid and staccato,

on my bedroom window. Already dressed, I met

you by the side door of the garage. We pushed

bikes through driveway gravel, large and loose

as Tinker Toy spools, tires too thin for anything

but blacktop. Headlights, reflectors, white sweatshirts,

we rode the night raw, rubber humming, stars

suspended, waiting for early light to blanch

out their faces. We ditched our wheels in a ravine

that fell away from the railroad tracks, traipsed

across ties and trestle to a rocky stretch

where the tree line yawned. We settled in for sunrise,

shivered in June’s early nip. Though we knew

the train wouldn’t barrel through ‘til 8:00 a.m.,

we imagined stray engines muscling toward us,

plotted scenarios of grim escape—bruises,

fractures—then lapsed into our usual banter:

Gollum’s ring, planetary orbits, Monty

Python’s *Spam*, Bach’s intricate fingerings.

We hushed as the peach aura singed the air,

applauded the sun, the climb from our snug covers,

the pancakes your mother would shovel onto our plates

in another hour. We knew, too, that we clapped

for our gritty hopes, blooms of warm breath,

kiss of distant stars. This was the script,

our timing perfect. We basked in each streak

of colored light, refracted by cloud and mist.

Later we devised another script, braided

our plot strands tight, tweaked the hours

down to the last thread—still the timing

slipped. This was the one we couldn’t finish.

Day that wouldn’t break.