



OH PLEASE, LET IT BE LIGHTNING

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By: Ada Limón

We were crossing the headwaters of
the Susquehanna River in our new car
we didn't quite have the money for
but it was slick and silver and we named it
after the local strip club next to the carwash:
The Spearmint Rhino, and this wasn't long
after your mother said she wasn't sure
if one of your ancestors died in childbirth,
or was struck by lightning, there just wasn't
anyone left to set the story straight, and we
started to feel old. And it snowed. The ice
and salt and mud on the car made it look
like how we felt on the inside. The dog
was asleep on my lap. We had seven more hours
before our bed in the bluegrass would greet us
like some Southern cousin we forgot we had.
Sometimes, you have to look around
at the life you've made and sort of nod at it,
like someone moving their head up and down
to a tune they like. New York City seemed years
away and all the radio stations had unfamiliar
call letters and talked about God, the one
that starts his name with a capital and wants
you to not get so naked all the time.
Sometimes, there seems to be a halfway point
between where you've been and everywhere
else, and we were there. All the trees were dead,
and the hills looked flat like in real bad landscape
paintings in some nowhere gallery off an interstate
but still, it looked kind of pretty. Not because
of the snow, but because you somehow found
a decent song on the dial and there you were,
with your marvelous mouth, singing full-lunged,
driving full-speed into the gloomy thunderhead,
glittery and blazing and alive. And it didn't matter
what was beyond us, or what came before us,

or what town we lived in, or where the money came from,
or what new night might leave us hungry and reeling,
we were simply going forward, riotous and windswept,
and all too willing to be struck by something shining
and mad, and so furiously hot it could kill us.

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