

Lesson #3: “The Abortion” by Anne Sexton¹

*Somebody who should have been born
is gone.*

Just as the earth puckered its mouth,
each bud puffing out from its knot,
I changed my shoes, and then drove south

Up past the Blue Mountains, where
Pennsylvania humps on endlessly,
wearing, like a crayoned cat, its green hair,

its roads sunken in like a gray washboard:
where, in truth, the ground cracks evilly,
A dark socket from which coal has poured,

*Somebody who should have been born
is gone.*

The grass as bristly and stout as chives,
and me wondering when the ground should break,
and me wondering how anything fragile survives;

Up in Pennsylvania, I met a little man,
not Rumpelstiltskin, at all, at all . . .
he took the fullness that love began.

Running north, even the sky grew thin,
Like a high window looking nowhere.
The road was as flat as a sheet of tin.

*Somebody who should have been born
is gone.*

Yes, woman, such logic will lead
to loss without death. Or say what you meant,
you coward... this baby that I bleed.

¹ Sexton, Anne. “The Abortion.” *The Complete Poems*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981. 61-62.; first published Sexton, Anne. “The Abortion.” *All My Pretty Ones*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1962. 20-21. Reprinted by permission of SLL/Sterling Lord Literistic, Inc. Copyright by Linda Gray Sexton.