

Michael Heffernan

Odyssey

Welcome in solitude, it came to him
that all he had to do was disappear
into a hinterland of country roads
that reached out to him from the Interstate
and stay away forever. Even Odysseus
had friendly beds to sleep in fairly often.
It wasn't so much a question of coming home
or finding homely comforts on the way.
It had to do with the goddess who lifts her lips
to a man's lips from the sweet grove she tends,
after his journey or in the midst of it,
whether she gives him life or lets him die.
A long way from the ocean, among the hills,
he delved the evening at a high rate of speed.
If he could recognize which birds there were
that seemed to cry to him through the open windows,
he'd name them as he put their songs behind him.