Kim Ellingson
Driving Over the Bridge

I drove to the Italian market this evening
and bought gnocchi, mushrooms,
a pistachio macaroon, a bottle of Riesling.

On the way home, I crossed the bridge
uneventfully—and caught myself smiling.
Months ago, my doctor asked if I had a plan

I said no, yet I constantly knew I could erase myself
with this yellow and gray bridge,
this endless azure water, still as a slate tile.

And I did—for a time, in the dark lake of my mind,

until the summer gold sun's refusal to stop
rising floated me back to the surface, and finally
I drove home that day, relentless, unafraid.

Viking Funeral

You pulled those yellow daisies
from the dirt and we buried them
near the tide line, covered their black eyes
in sand until the beach foam

washed them away, their slight petals
reaching for the moon as they floated
307 miles to the other side
of Lake Michigan.

Our sacrifice to the freshwater gods.

Here, in Nebraska, they grow tall
as tree saplings. Bopping their heads
among the baked prairie grass
near the river, peering over gunmetal

highway guardrails. Entire fields of them, acres
upon acres of swaying, laughing yellow
dots spanning the wide stretch
between Omaha and Lincoln.

Always beaming, reminding me
of last summer, when I told you
I wasn't suicidal anymore, and you suggested
we hold a Viking Funeral for our sorrows.

Bones

He constantly, silently directed you. Consider your wrist trapped in his grip as the two of you ride in the back of a cab. Rather than tell you to stop talking in front of the driver, he squeezes as the car travels fast down East Washington Avenue. Squeezes harder as you whir past dimmed street-lights illuminating acquainted buildings and trees—hometown blocks you've known since childhood, now reduced to a panicked, distorted haze—squeezes until it feels as though he will crush all eight carpal bones while you hold your breath and tell yourself *remember.*