

THE TOAD'S WILD RIDE

after the broadcast the toad and i retire
to the pub across the street.
a couple pints of bitter later
i offer to let him share a lift with me:
though i've only met the people
i'm staying with once before,
i'm sure that they won't mind.
adam, the husband, a suited man
with bald crown encircled
by wavy frantic hair, says, "right.
who's this? turns out his wife
has called him out of work
and mentioned nothing of the toad.
that's when it begins,
our swaying swerving jolting dash
past postal vans, hard into space
vacated by lorries one second earlier,
adam whispering fierce curses,
horn-pounding, brake-stomping,
screeching around every corner
on the wrong side of the road.
"where do you work?" the toad ventures once.
"in a factory on the other side of hull."
that ends all conversation
but the toad's quiet directions
to his hotel. when i apologize later
the toad just shrugs, "what the fuck.
maybe i'll do a reading at his factory.
i know how the poor bastard feels."

— David Starkey

Florence SC

SITTING

here reflecting
as the thermostat
clicks
and the heater
turns on

I'M TRYING HARD

to clear some of the
bullshit from my writing,
to get down to the basic,
simple idea of each
poem and then move on.