

2020

Beneath the Surface

Ross Peters

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/bpr>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#), and the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Peters, Ross (2020) "Beneath the Surface," *Birmingham Poetry Review*: Vol. 47, Article 81.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/bpr/vol47/iss2020/81>

This content has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of the UAB Digital Commons, and is provided as a free open access item. All inquiries regarding this item or the UAB Digital Commons should be directed to the [UAB Libraries Office of Scholarly Communication](#).

Ross Peters

Beneath the Surface

You would fan wax onto the hood, the doors,
The roof of your pea-soup '73 Impala—

All of it drying yellow until you buffed it
Into those Saturday nights. Now rust blisters

Along the edge of the hood, the bottom of the doors,
And the back corner of the roof—the trade-offs

Of four decades. When you were a kid,
You'd push the air from your lungs and drop

To the pool's bottom to live apart until you couldn't.
Now with your muffler coughing, your tires bald

With hints of steel belts showing through,
You exhale all the breath you can

As if you are looking for purchase somewhere.
You fear spinning out on the wet macadam,

And you imagine the gravel pop, the clutch grind.
Finally, you remember your passenger—

No doubt gripping tight and bracing,
As your cheek muscles tighten around your eyes.

But for the centrifugal force of it all,
You would look at her buckled in,

Driving her fingernails through the plastic skin
Into the subcutaneous foam of the armrest.

You suck the air into your lungs as your
Shoulder blades pull together until they almost touch.