

## DORIANNE LAUX

# Bridges

I slept under the overpass, in summer,  
near Lodi, California, with my boyfriend.  
I was sixteen. We hitchhiked  
up the coast. For no reason. Just to have  
something to do. We slept in fields  
singing with crickets, in graveyards,  
beneath tombstones, names erased  
by the rain, under the shade of a red  
madrone. Some nights we were so tired  
we pressed our backs against the shoulder  
of the road, woke to a semi jackknifed  
in the middle of the two-lane. It's a good  
thing to look where you're going, but  
we didn't. We simply followed  
the white lines and ended up  
where we ended up, restless  
in our sleeping bags, or staring out  
the window of a stranger's truck,  
listening to country music, counting  
bridges. I'm not sure if anything  
meant anything to us. We weren't  
going anywhere or running from  
anything. We'd look out at the stars,  
specks of light we couldn't imagine  
having come from, but I can't say we  
pondered much beyond what we might  
scare up for breakfast with our last  
few dollars. My mother hated  
aimlessness and so I guess that's what  
I was doing. Wandering around, as she  
said, like a chicken with its head cut off.  
We found a roadside diner and shared  
a plate of pancakes. Nothing bad happened.  
I'm not sure when or why we decided  
to turn back.

**Dorianne Laux**'s most recent collection is *Only as the Day Is Long: New and Selected*, W.W. Norton. She is also author of *The Book of Men*, winner of the Paterson Poetry Prize and *Facts about the Moon*, winner of the Oregon Book Award. She teaches poetry at North Carolina State and Pacific University.

## FRANK GALUSZKA

*Death Valley, 2001*  
Oil on panel, 17 x 28 in



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