

Greg Alan Brownderville

A Tennessee to Love

His mama's knees looked like potatoes.
The boy caught her praying on them once
and heard his name.
She didn't know he was standing there.
He walked over and laid his hand
on her shoulder, asked her was she sad.
She looked up, blue eyes like wilted Morning Glories,
said, *No, honey, go help your daddy with the wood.*

He walked outside and shivered
in a blue coat. Dusk.
His favorite time of day.
Not that he could see any better,
but he could tell himself
it was just the sun fading.
His daddy sputtered up in the truck
with a rick of firewood
and the two of them unloaded it in a rolling stack.
The boy wished he could lift the big logs.
When he mentioned what he had heard,
his daddy said, *Mamas pray for the people they love.*

Why's she crying?

*Your mama has a tendency
to love real hard.*

*A Tennessee to love, the boy heard.
For a couple armfuls, he studied on it.
A whole Tennessee, he said. Must take a heap of love.*

The rusted bed chip-empty,
he smelled pork chops frying in the house.