

ADDIE AT EIGHTY

Glenna Holloway

It's hard, she said,
always being so damn grateful
for snow shoveling
or getting a couch moved or rides downtown.
Afterwards I knew she was scolding herself
for getting crotchety.

Once she told me how
some nights she'd think
about white lightning--
the kind the old sheriff used to make
and stash away for years to mellow.
You knew it never had dead birds or frogs
in it and wasn't colored with tobacco juice.
It was a kind of slow pure white
that takes some of your breath away
but leaves your tongue intact
and contents your throat and gut
like a good honeydew melon only warm.
That's how it oughta be, she said,
to grow old.