Constellations

In my short walk from car to front door
I pause, held by the sky overhead
and the stars as fierce and clear
as the night you and I once left behind
campsite and firelight for the moonless, cold
dark, the soft crunch of gravel, the vivid chirp
of frogs and crickets along Chalone Creek,
down the two-lane blacktop, beyond the last fork
to its dead end where we stopped
and lay on our backs in the road, side by side.
You picked out the stars by name
and joined them one by one into Great
and Little Bear and the Dragon and Pegasus
the Flying Horse, no motion
except for your pointed finger
and my gaze in its wake across the sky
through the Pleiades and the Milky Way
to Polaris, the North Star, a faint prick
of light like the pebble in my shoulder
against the asphalt as I half listened
and half-watched sideways, afraid
for those far-off headlights approaching
which turned, of course, into the campground.

Jerome Gentes