George Hears Noises

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The woman in the next apartment yelps, loving someone over and over.
I want to hear her clear,
like a P. A. switch got left on,
but no, below my window
a car with bad power steering
angles in and out, driver cranking
the wheel, so shrill I can’t hear.

Yesterday Sheila and I drove to Woodbine,
close to forgiving each other.
Our tires clipped I-29 expansion joints.
The radio said, “If you get lost,
come on home to Green River,”
but whatever we heard between us went the way that radio tune went when we drove under the power lines.

At seventeen, in Phelp’s Park on a blanket in the dark, I touched Sheila, first time, under the elastic. She made sounds — but mixed up now in my ear, with rubber braking on asphalt on a near street, the thud of car hitting a dog, the high clipped howls sprinting away. And Sheila’s breath still in my ear.

I like to hunt Irv Yahr’s pasture and timber and I need to hear pickup tailgates latched, wet foxtail and broomgrass brushing my legs, flushed grouse winging it. My shotgun won’t wreck the sound, but complete it — not the roar in my ear at the shot, but the report come back from the trees.