

The below pieces are pieces that approach the idea of living in the suburbs using unique perspectives. We are asking for your 5th poem that you demonstrate your understanding of surviving in the suburbs and apply your unique perspective to it.

Example Piece 1

Suburban Pastoral

By Dave Lucas

Twilight folds over houses on our street;
its hazy gold is gilding our front lawns,
delineating asphalt and concrete
driveways with shadows. Evening is coming on,
quietly, like a second drink, the beers
men hold while rising from their plastic chairs
to stand above their sprinklers, and approve.

Soon the fireflies will rise in lucent droves—
for now, however, everything seems content
to settle into archetypal grooves:
the toddler's portraits chalked out on cement,
mothers in windows, finishing the dishes.
Chuck Connelly's cigarette has burned to ashes;
he talks politics to Roger in the drive.

"It's all someone can do just to survive,"
he says, and nods—both nod—and pops another
beer from the cooler. "No rain. Would you believe—"
says Chuck, checking the paper for the weather.
At least a man can keep his yard in shape.
Somewhere beyond this plotted cityscape
their sons drive back and forth in borrowed cars:

how small their city seems now, and how far
away they feel from last year, when they rode
their bikes to other neighborhoods, to score
a smoke or cop a feel in some girl's bed.
They tune the radio to this summer's song
and cruise into the yet-to-exhale lung
of August night. Nothing to do but this.

These are the times they'd never dream they'll miss—
the hour spent chasing a party long burned out,

graphic imagined intercourse with Denise.
This is all they can even think about,
and thankfully, since what good would it do
to choke on madeleines of temps perdu
when so much time is set aside for that?

Not that their fathers weaken with regret
as nighttime settles in—no, their wives
are on the phone, the cooler has Labatt
to spare; at nine the Giants play the Braves.
There may be something to romanticize
about their own first cars, the truths and lies
they told their friends about some summer fling,

but what good is it now, when anything
recalled is two parts true and one part false?
When no one can remember just who sang
that song that everybody loved? What else?
It doesn't come to mind. The sprinkler spits
in metronome; they're out of cigarettes.
Roger folds up his chair, calls it a day.

The stars come out in cosmic disarray,
and windows flash with television blues.
The husbands come to bed, nothing to say
but 'night . Two hours late—with some excuse—
their sons come home, too full of songs and girls
to notice dew perfect its muted pearls
or countless crickets singing for a mate.

MY TOWN or HOW YOU SEE YOUR SUBURB ONCE YOU'VE LEFT IT

By Addy Novy

*"The first time my town saw the sky
it sucker punched us in the throat
left us breathless said,
'I'm gonna keep you awake some nights
without touching you.
You'll make it up, the pain, you always do.'"*
-Buddy Wakefield, MY TOWN

My town is all Midwestern annual historic festivals
and corn.

My town has more corn than we would like to admit.
If you drive a couple miles, you can easily miss us.

My town is a middle class contradiction of Caribou Coffee
and local open-mic-night-hosting shops along the same
strip.

We are still learning how to coexist.
We are homespun religion and a place that keeps you safe
past ten.

Each year, my town holds one of the most beautiful
Christmas Walks I have ever seen.

On the yard of the old-fashioned brick courthouse, the tree
that has stood there for decades is illuminated with strings
of light and paper ornaments drawn outside the lines by
children.

The warm, yellow street lamps are laced
with bright ribbons and evergreen.

We are a snow globe that does not know what will happen
when the world turns us over.

We are one of the top places in the United States to raise a
family, but print out our name like it's a punch line.

My town is Facebook battles between the scene kids and the preps, likes to crush Halloween pumpkins and slips under-aged-drinking beer bottles into mailboxes with the morning paper.

My town is the current home of the world's largest candy cane, Jenny McCarthy, a girl who went viral for an acoustic cover of Chief Keef's *Love Sosa*, and a No Grinding Policy that landed itself onto Chelsea Lately.

My town **Lives Free** and **Grinds Hard** regardless of the rules.

My town is so small but it struts like it's a big deal, plays Dress Up in Mama's yoga pants and Ugg boots and constantly gets selfishness scrubbed off its tongue with soap.

My town is aware that the punishment is bitter, but doesn't get how sweet it's got it.

My town likes to pretend that it is the poster child for white privilege, where students know the power of racial slurs, but will still use them anyways.

My town knows that it has struggling families too, but will brag about it's deep pockets.

We are well-off enough for lunch money, and will crack jokes about city ghettos,

Our subtweets are far worse than our bite.

My town calls Chicago: *Bullet Holes and Knife Fights*.

My town has never seen a knife fight...

or poverty...

or drop-out rates...

or gang shootings...

police tape does not fence in houses here.

My town is oblivious on how to stop up the blood from

when it goes and shoots its mouth off.

My town would probably cover up the chalk outlines with a new football field.

My town did not get its teeth kicked in when it saw the sky because it claims we were the ones who saw it first.

My town is still convinced that the sky was made special just for us,
meant to fit inside the glass bubble perfectly,
not realizing that there is more out there past our line of vision.