

In New York City, 1979

Joe Favata, you were the Italian boy
with the beautiful name I met outside
the cathedral of St. John the Divine on a windy day
half a lifetime ago.

The stories you told were magic
because they were not mine, your Queens
childhood far from my open Iowa fields.

You were the mystery of that whole city in one
afternoon; I fell in love with your world, bright as a
red-checked curtain in a dark paneled room.

I never told anyone whose name was written
on that matchbook cover, the one I carried in my pocket
through more than a decade of flights back,
the one I didn't phone.

March afternoons the wind still carries your voice.

Your amaretto kisses, far from home,
are still the sweetest thing I've known.