

## A Partial Explanation

Then we mostly had what we'd had before:  
no meat, no car, no father to call upon.

You cleaned a hotel swimming pool,  
and I made pizzas, but only half a week.  
Otherwise, you painted, I wrote,  
and we walked the dog at midnight.

Every now and then we'd go to Safeway,  
buy a Betty Crocker cake mix.  
After baking and frosting,  
we'd feast at three in the morning.

Our first Christmas, we sat cross-legged,  
made paper cutouts, ~~and~~ colored them,  
serious children with Crayolas. *Crayons,*  
We hung our work on a ragged tree.

One February, we borrowed bikes,  
rode in the dark, no lights  
—seven miles along a rainy coastline—  
because we wanted live music.

~~One late night, we found a stray grocery cart.  
You rode, and I pushed. It tipped,  
us to the ground, and we laughed,  
rolled into each other.~~

When your paintings began to sell,  
and I earned white-collar money,  
I went to bed early,  
and you walked the dog alone.

—Theresa McCourt