

# I Keep Moving

—Jennifer Pacanowski

Seriously, nowhere is safe.  
The grate's warmth  
enough comfort to capture a few winks  
All my belongings lie under  
my head, my functional ruck sack pillow.  
No one can steal it without waking me.  
My sleeping bag wraps around me  
a cocoon without the luxury of transformation.  
I awake to the same day replaying  
time passes without any contribution from me.  
I lowered my guard just long enough  
to get kicked by a cop for sleeping  
on the street near Macy's.  
NO REST.  
I keep moving, my ribs bruised.  
I am surrounded by emptiness.  
I long for the days when my buddies  
had my back, sleep coming quick after days  
convoying on the roads of Iraq.  
I would lie on top of my sleeping bag  
Surrounded by guns and the soldiers  
who knew how to use them  
Life was simple, dare I say, easy.  
Or at least predictable  
You followed orders.  
You did your job.

You were in danger  
You were protected.  
You lived or died.  
NO GRAY.  
We kept moving.  
Like I do now

So, I still keep moving.  
No one needs to see me,  
It only hurts them,  
Blaming themselves for my actions that  
Their good intentions have no control over.  
I don't care.  
I don't deserve it.  
I hate the daylight.  
People stare and scoff. Get a job. Lazy. Bum.  
Avoiding eye contact because  
I'm a reminder of fear.  
Of loss. I keep moving through the tourist spots  
watch for the school buses from out of state.  
Hoping I am the first nomadic traveler  
they have ever seen and their offerings flow into my hat.  
Those careless eaters with nice coats and fancy sneakers  
Always leave warm french fries and half eaten burgers in their  
Mickey D bags.  
Sometimes the conscientious, bleeding hearts want to bargain:  
Don't buy alcohol or drugs with my money.  
As the 40 ounces of liquid flow down my throat,  
Reality drifts away into the soft fuzzy glow of the street lamp.

No one sees me. The sun dwindles on the horizon.  
There is enough sobriety in that thought for anyone.

I don't want to be saved.