



### **Regular Gig**

The old man's thin and naked  
in the JCCC gym  
and chats me up while he towels  
down his red body, scalp  
sparsely feathered as a baby bird's head.

He says what do I do, and I tell him  
I teach comp, and he says,

“You keep adjuncting, and you'll  
only be able to take your family  
out to McDonald's.

Find a regular gig,” he says,  
“whatever the cost.”

### **Homecoming**

Eric's voice has so much  
more gravel now, just  
four years out. Once  
you hit the road, the road  
follows you—in your  
guitar face knicks, in the stickers  
across your case, in how  
you hardly ever now  
set your drink down.

## **Croon, Swoon**

When I get low

I turn on Madeleine Peyroux  
singing “Blue Alert,”

and my heart goes soft  
mush and my lips curl

up, and my shoulders fall  
and rise with my breath, all

well again, my wrists loose  
as if stirring brushes

soup for her, chanteuse,  
songbird, ear tunnel love.

## **Mid-January, 15 Miles South of Emporia on I-35, Scenic Overlook**

Skin of ice

on the country pond,

black limbs

stretch

from frigid water.

We stop, but not

long enough

to watch

the thaw.

## Hors d'Oeuvres

EE chomps  
on a chicken wing  
holds the orange bone and meat  
beside his spit valve ring  
while he plays, center stage,  
he snacks during the bridge,  
teeth, teeth, while the guitar  
and bass take it, play.

Kansas Poet Laureate (2017-2019), **Kevin Rabas** teaches at Emporia State University, where he leads the poetry and playwriting tracks and chairs the Department of English, Modern Languages, and Journalism. He has nine books, including *Lisa's Flying Electric Piano*, a Kansas Notable Book and Nelson Poetry Book Award winner.