## Internal Combustion By Noah Caldwell-Gervais Editors' Choice Winner, Poetry

Snow piled on the black vinyl roof
I open the door, the snow falls down
Covering the armrest, power seat controls
In hills of white, windows grey, buried
I'm sitting with my gloves on the dash
In the deep burgundy embrace of the
Omni-directional power driver's seat
Watching the snow on the steering wheel
Melt from the heat of

The fire started in the gas tank
(According to the police report)
Which is appropriate, in a way
Twenty-five gallons of gasoline
For thirty years, burned too—
A city of dinosaur bones pumped
From a Chevron in Silver City, NM
From a Valero in Mena, OK
From a Texaco outside Memphis, TN
From the station down the street
From where we lived, Jack's Gas
Where Jack would smile and pump
It all himself, always happy to see

The grill of the car fell off, or maybe it melted But it wasn't there when I went to see the Wreckage in the impound lot, what was left of The long, black Lincoln that cruised nightly Down the streets outside my apartment With roommates, friends, with her, All four headlights illuminating the freeway signs Tempting us further into the undiscovered world, We don't need a hotel, hell, we'll just sleep in

The backseat was always so comfortable, really More of a couch than any other car seat I've sat in So far back, so much foot room, so much leg room Room for legs and feet entwined, writhing Just like a couch you could hear the springs rattling See the windows fogging from the warmth of

The flames gutted the whole thing, everything So flammable, the cushions, plastic, woodgrain It must've happened so quickly, but a woman Who heard the explosion, she said That when the fire reached the front of the car (Which is where the fusebox is) The horn stuck on, wailing its death throes Into the night until the flames melted the whole Horn assembly, which I never had to use myself, People would always clear out of the way when they

See it burn, now
The flames a roaring tide of headliner
Black paint turning to black smoke
Rivulets of glove compartment running
Like red, toxic tears—windshield shattering
See it burn, then
Roaring down freeways, highways, driveways
An ancient, rattling luxury golem
Given gas, sweat, oil, blood, love
See it as it burned for me