

Naton Leslie

THE LOST EPISODES

If film steals the past,
then the child grubbing
in dirt out the side
door of our house trailer,
lot triked to hardpack,
is surely me, and the sister

who pulls me straight
for the 8mm, pokes me,
is an evil Shirley Temple
directing me in her movie.

Photograph/gravure/engraved.

I'm captured with a fistful
of birthday cake at two,
wanting a carnival ride
at four, but film recalls

me yanking a safety fence
and here comes Shirley
to pull that fence too,
as that is being filmed,
letting no part escape,

trying out for toddler
at five. When the camera
lights are gone, she twists
my face in her hands.

A picture of George Kish,
who inherited a scrapyard,
shows the lucky, violent
man throwing an arm around
my shoulders as he promised

not to punch me. I drove
blocks in Masury to find
a woman I knew was lost
to an image of a wallet-
sized future, who thought
a wild youth led to content

age and albums. These are
tracks, persisting in
the hard dirt, in memory,
vision in chemical light.