

Ray Romano: Patron Saint of Trivial Comforts
by Mike Chaulk

Drove, sure we did, along narrow 37A, the long while
our odds splattering the cliff faces our high-beams
catching snowmelt spitting from cracks, blood from ears,

reflecting off road signs that warned against boulders,
under easy avalanche in the possible night air pressed
from us; warning us, on watch for moose, bears, burial—

Debra! Raymond whines, taking
his loafers off before bed,
he and I like two minivans passing in the night—

which, my fears not wholly unfounded. For one, juneo06
onCarGurus.com, regarding the 2001 Kia Sedona,
warned, *engine no power weak*; for two our fuel gauge,

its ticking how long since the last fill, anyone else seen.
They know better, the Northern May better, its dangers
and glaciers' crawl, chased us, finally, to The Next Nearest

Motel, its thawing child-receptionist humming along
to a broken bulb, pastel-blue paint, the town asleep,
its fuel and families locked up: border workers, many likely.

Why does everyone here own a truck?, I ask. You think
they all need one? Like actually *need?*, the long while Ray
complaining of pillows: a straight middle class white man

to me, a cozied close call on the edge of Alaska grips
tight the old remote, begs Ray not to turn off his lamp.
I need you like a sitcom, Ray. Our pillows, Ray. Us.