

BILL COYLE

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## The Soundman's Funeral

We honored his request, playing in lieu  
of hymns or eulogies the sounds he made  
back in the old days, sounds that made  
the most unlikely tales ring true.

A squeal of brakes, a thunderclap, a shot,  
a locomotive's wail, coyotes crying.  
Some of the guests by then were crying,  
others, lost in the story, not.

Rain on a tin roof, a dog barking, boughs  
groaning in a great wind. We thought of him,  
of all that found its voice through him.  
A door—the front door of a house?—

slammed and we listened as someone descended  
a creaking stairway, opened a car door,  
started the car up, shut the door,  
then drove off. So the story ended.

Or not the story, but that episode,  
to be continued anytime we hear  
one of his trademark noises, hear  
a car pull past us on the road,

say, or a dog bark. Not that he's not gone,  
but it may help, now that he's left this life,  
to hear him in the sounds of life,  
which is a show, and must go on.