

2021

Cruel Mercy

William Yasinski

Follow this and additional works at: <https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/mrr>



Part of the [Fiction Commons](#), and the [Poetry Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Yasinski, W. (2021). Cruel Mercy, *Mad River Review*, 5 (1).

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by CORE Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mad River Review by an authorized editor of CORE Scholar. For more information, please contact library-corescholar@wright.edu.

William Arnold Yasinski

Cruel Mercy

Sharp fall day in Maine, keeping
a cinematic pace on a two-lane
through the excruciating beauty,
I come up a rise to a farm,
barn on the right, house left,
and feel a thumpity triplet
as gray-white flashes peripherally

and I know, somehow, it's a cat.
I stop and another stops behind,
between us the convulsing body.
We arrive at the victim knowing
we have to end its misery, but
there are no rocks. She looks
at me, shames my hesitation—

“If you won't, I will.” No time
for thought. I grab its legs,
to eliminate pain, and swing—
not wholeheartedly enough—
then again—full arc of cruel mercy,
defining, for a moment,
the limits of civilization.

We put the body in a box
on the porch. I write an apology
along with my details. We look
long seconds at each other,
say, “Thank you,” in unison,
as if a sort of prayer, and leave
what we can't change.