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Maybe Kansas

Anders Carlson-Wee

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MAYBE KANSAS

We were somewhere in the middle
of the country. Maybe Kansas. Maybe Iowa.
I remember a small farm and a stave silo,
gravel roads cutting through fields
of flint corn, turnouts for tractors dipping
into ditches and dissolving in the half-
formed husks. We camped in the rows
and chewed the dry kernels uncooked.
Slept pressed together in that narrowed-
down land. Got knots in our backs
from the base-roots. In the morning
I divided the gear. Sent you with the filter
and atlas. Watched you walk down
the shoulder and waver in the heat-lift.
Then I went back into the fields.
And as I went, I closed my eyes
and made a practice of that blindness.
Followed the tractor-tilled grid, listened hard
in the ditch before crossing the roads.
Felt the weight of my footsteps unhinge.
My reddened hands outstretched, heavy
and shapeless and numb in the tips.
Not me going forward so much as the flint-
corn coming through my clay-caked hands
and passing. Not you disappearing
so much as Kansas vanishing.