So This Is Nebraska

By Ted Kooser

The gravel road rides with a slow gallop over the fields, the telephone lines streaming behind, its billow of dust full of the sparks of redwing blackbirds.

On either side, those dear old ladies, the loosening barns, their little windows dulled by cataracts of hay and cobwebs hide broken tractors under their skirts.

So this is Nebraska. A Sunday afternoon; July. Driving along with your hand out squeezing the air, a meadowlark waiting on every post.

Behind a shelterbelt of cedars, top-deep in hollyhocks, pollen and bees, a pickup kicks its fenders off and settles back to read the clouds.

You feel like that; you feel like letting your tires go flat, like letting the mice build a nest in your muffler, like being no more than a truck in the weeds, clucking with chickens or sticky with honey or holding a skinny old man in your lap while he watches the road, waiting for someone to wave to. You feel like waving. You feel like stopping the car and dancing around on the road. You wave instead and leave your hand out gliding larklike over the wheat, over the houses.

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