

# 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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