# 

# **A Harvest Morning**

# 

# The mist hangs thick about the early field

# & many a shout is heard while nought appears

# Till close upon the gaze so thick conseald

# Are things in mornings mist mayhap her tears

# For summers sad departure—silence hears

# Brown harvests dittys that disturb full soon

# Her rest—toils lusty brawls that daily cheers

# Its ignorance of sorrows with the boon

# Of pastoral tunes ere morns red sun appears

# Till dreamy evenings ruddy harvest moon

# Hangs its large lamp to light them home again

# The little children in their harvest dress

# Amid the stubs of trifling ills complain

# —John Clare

# **Lost Acres**

# These acres, always again lost

# By every new ordnance-survey

# And searched for at exhausting cost

# Of time and thought, are still away.

# They have their paper-substitute—

# Intercalculation of an inch

# At the so-many-thousandth foot—

# And no one parish feels the pinch.

# But lost they are, despite all care,

# And perhaps likely to be bound

# Together in a piece somewhere,

# A plot of undiscovered ground.

# Invisible, they have the spite

# To swerve the tautest measuring-chain

# And the exact theodolite

# Perched every side of them in vain.

# Yet, be assured, we have no need

# To plot these acres of the mind

# With prehistoric fern and reed

# And monsters such as heroes find.

# Maybe they have their flowers, their birds,

# Their trees behind the phantom fence,

# But of a substance without words:

# To walk there would be loss of sense.

# —Robert Graves

# 

# **Three Kinds of Pleasures**

# I

# Sometimes, riding in a car, in Wisconsin

# Or Illinois, you notice those dark telephone poles

# One by one lift themselves out of the fence line

# And slowly leap on the gray sky—

# And past them, the snowy fields.

# II

# The darkness drifts down like snow on the picked cornfields

# In Wisconsin: and on these black trees

# Scattered, one by one,

# Through the winter fields—

# We see stiff weeds and brownish stubble,

# And white snow left now only in the wheeltracks of the combine.

# III

# It is a pleasure, also, to be driving

# Toward Chicago, near dark,

# And see the lights in the barns.

# The bare trees more dignified than ever,

# Like a fierce man on his deathbed,

# And the ditches along the road half full of a private snow.

# 

# —Robert Bly

# **On Merrow Down**

# This is the moment of the cuckoo bee,

# lurching from bullace to cardamine;

# heat bleeds the trees; Brimstone and Orange Tip

# wink in the plaited grass; the meadow stands

# in the pool of its own shade, summer-stunned,

# even the dowsing beetle, on a spiked

# acre of Yorkshire Fog, is heron-like,

# wading in fleece; stopped rabbits dream of air,

# pressed to their pulsing young, terrified, live

# scent maps of fox paths and snares;

# the little owl waits in the lucid roof,

# above the lunchtime walkers, to descend

# through the cool stratus of an evening wind

# into the hoop of rain and yellow stars.

# —John Burnside

**Keeping Things Whole**

In a field

I am the absence

of field.

This is

always the case.

Wherever I am

I am what is missing.

When I walk

I part the air

and always

the air moves in

to fill the spaces

where my body’s been.

We all have reasons

for moving.

I move

to keep things whole.

—Mark Strand

# **Woman in a Mustard Field**

# From love to light my element

# was altered when I fled

# out of your house to meet the space

# that blows about my head.

# The sun was rude and sensible,

# the rivers ran for hours

# and whoops I found a mustard field

# exploding into flowers;

# and I slowly came to sense again

# the thousand forms that move

# all summer through a living world

# that grows without your love.

# —Alice Oswald

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