

To the Girl I Loved · *Ross Talarico*

In Iowa City  
There are young poets, lots of them,  
And one by one  
They take down their pants.

When things get technical,  
Like the language of science or  
Classical literature,  
We reach out  
Into the evening's earth  
And remember the long way back  
To the stubborn root.

Love is not a word for poets.  
On these nights  
When the blank page shines back  
At the lovely moon  
And the vast fields open  
To the wondrous shadows of something invisible  
In the sky,

On these nights  
When there is always one man  
Enough hours away looking at the same sky  
And baffled by imagination,  
There is nothing that will  
Save us.

So we listen,  
And there, in the midwest,  
Where the pork heart is fed cheap feed  
Until it's ready to burst,  
We hear the strange grunt  
Of the pig  
As it cleanses itself one last time  
In the reality of mud  
And heaves its bulk against another  
In the pathetic gesture of species . . .

And we go on listening,  
To the incredible quiet as the hiss  
Of the air stops  
Against the patch the farmer  
Places dutifully and calm  
On the tire that will carry him . . .

This is the night we wait for,  
This is the life we regret.  
Goodbye my friend the pig;  
The world is so terribly hungry.