

BEEF TUNE

Each one moves along
a path in the field
with old cow tunes in its jaws, listening
for lost anthems bound to rise again
in pastures where they sank
long bovine years ago.

But it's only fencewire humming, grass
whispering the usual gene warnings
impossible to hear over molars grinding,
generations grazing, trails
to the chute. The way buffalo

nickels used to waddle down the slot—
the colored lights light,
the turning grooves rise up to meet
the lowering needle arms—the way

everything seems to settle
and sink in, settle and sink in,
settle and sink in.