

Walking on a Field · *Mary Jane White*

I look in one direction
at a time. Peripheral vision's there,
but blurred in coming
to me by a small
infirmity I can't

expect to conquer once like
virginity or a mountaintop.
It's something I do
try to compensate
for—turning my head, whole

body to see. I feel a
little awkward and that is all as
I watch my friend's brisk
approach. We walk off
together; a cornstalk

turns on its pithy axis
as we come up, pass by its twirled blade
like leaves, bent tassel
and swathed, full cob dropped
like the forefoot of a

bee, all golden-bleached. I draw
you one, but a good number—thousands
of these—remotely
like ourselves—stand
rustling intimately

in their ordered rows, each in
wry, minimal contact. Rooted, how
can they help but move
as they do, and bow
to hail, sleet, wind, and snow,

finally. Still, to speak of
these too sadly's to step ahead of
ourselves—up rises
the present, gentle,
mounded hill, plowed and

easily taken for
a pastoral *but* to Iowa's
flatness. The story
about that hill is:
a tractor flipped over

on a farmer and killed him
bloodily. This field's his place and his
absence—not so much
to us as to the
several people in his

house. Sad homily, sad old
earth's story, it's hard and right we see
enough to know a bit
about him, to make
a forcible entry.