

MARK DALEY

Mermill Rd., Milton Center

We're watered down, this morning light diffuse
in fog, the power lines just tense enough to keep this finite
row of electric poles in single file, leaning
towards a windbreak on the road's far side,
above a ditch that wheels on ice can only just stay out of.

These man-made channels drain the farmlands,
every inch of ground preserved for corn and soy,
and the state route shoulders tight against them,
squeezed through bridges at each junction.
Not much gets through. Six boxcars rust away

along a siding, the picture of perspective, their roofs
a perfect incline to the place they disappear.
In town the silos line up close to church. The houses
by the railroad crossing slant, their paint attenuated,
and their walls a parallelogram against the dull

horizon line. In our old car's speckled windshield,
frost edges from the weak and whining flow of heat,
and she is quiet, looking out her window. Milton,
closed. I can't say what's so important here.
The roofless barns, their rotted wood, the railroad track

without a stop. A name to fill in maps with. Milton.
Wearing down like weather does a rock.