

the window is full of fields,
and the fields are full of beans—
300 tons hanging gently
from stalks so tender and
so brittle, the burden of
one bird would break them.

LEARNING TO DANCE

I

There used to be a horse
in that pasture, a piebald
gelding. He was the only way
my father knew where to turn
when he was visiting.

I remember baling hay there
for the first time, before
the horses, before the sheep,
before my father ever thought
to visit. The sun again close,
our bodies wracked yet constantly
in motion. Waves of grain
in waves of heat. Our stomachs,
the world, moving, our lives a song
we were teaching ourselves
to dance to.

II

Now it's weeds,
now it's beans,
now the old shed
is crumbling.
Sheep turn as the
morning advances.

My father is gone.
It is no longer now,
it is thousands of years
before man existed,
the horizon strangely red
and burning.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES

for Arlen and Fran Gangwish

The buzzing of flies
over a carcass.

The promise of life
in the seed and the rain and the soil.

Every morning our eyes
come to rest on the horizon.

Such a large sky full of emptiness,
clouds heavy with air and floating water.

These are our children growing
ever closer to leaving.

Nothing so near as distance.

THE REASON FOR POETRY

There are only two chickens left now
since the wild dogs got done with them.
They don't seem to care, those that remain,
cooing in the coop with a tank full of water
and cracked corn they couldn't finish in a season.
I'll never get over how real the world is
and yet, how easily it disappears,