

God's Country

We roll past the rusted
dinosaurs of the field,
their lug iron wheels
buried a foot
in dry mud ruts,

And piles of broken timber
caught in white stone walls.
Skeletons of cows loll
beneath the wood
to keep warm.

The evening mists
coming off the fields
melt into the haze
and the smoke
from the farmhouse chimney

That lies over the windows.
We've been here before
in God's country,
gone past to the mountains
searching for ghosttowns

And never found a mark
where two towns had been
(Joller and Jackson),
except ten lost feet
of railroad track,

And have come again
to stop by the farm
we abandoned once.
Now it's autumn.
Nights grow long.

We are tired
of being tourists
on a weed-
surrendered road.
We cannot look at this

Wreckage through the window
and not feel our backs work
beneath a load,
iron wheels unbrake
across a field.

JOSEPH GROSSMAN

The Red Shirt

Each morning
I forget a little more.
The solitary cry of the bluejay
grows dimmer.
Midnight memories
stay buried in the meadow.
Leaves change
in the midst of changing.

Then I remember my hand
hanging from its shoulder,
how it betrays me getting dressed.
How it twists the buttons
of your old red shirt.

GAIL GHAI