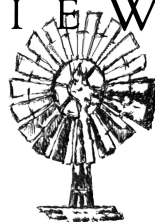


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## Here and Now

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# Here and Now

By Dennis Ross

Driving along an Iowa gravel road,  
I am sometimes jolted wide awake  
as from a forever sleep, struck  
by the immediacy of the world,

by a purple vermillion sunset  
over eight-foot corn, a raccoon  
with three babies clutching to her back,  
or a deer and two fawns transfixed  
in the road, staring wide-eyed  
at my old truck before wheeling  
to bound into the ditch and jump  
the tumbledown barbed wire fence.

Sometimes it is a glowing white barn  
freshly painted, or a field full  
of roly-poly cows each with a wide  
white band around their black body,  
a bit like pandas, designed no doubt  
by small, giggling farm children.

Even one blue iris, which Grandma  
called flags, can ring that wakening bell.