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Chester, Montana: All the Windrows One Way

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CHESTER, MONTANA: ALL THE WINDROWS
ONE WAY

Row after row along the road,
a steady blast at eighty,
a thought for you the sky at least
must ring a bell. It was much
to have learned from the depression
how to plant this wheat. I suppose
living Montana means you'd know
when you have had your fill.

I thought anywhere for news why not
call collect. Charge it, what the hell,
damn world's out of step. Speak direct
you urged, clear, keep in touch.
Diversion's the word: I stepped off
on sidewalk cracks here
hard, lost for the love of might.

It must be your world, vast exactly,
curves, slow, away, then round.
Mine's blurred, slick or flawed,
suddenly steep with heights,
one smug continental view or another
packed up each peak. Wheat or snow
this land goes on and on. I try
and shake it shrugging earth.
You look up. Call it work.

Wind in my face, grain, cloud or haze,
I spoke today of love, poetry, the world
as if all were better only by the book.
The pin we all heard drop
snapped when your warm applause
broke my practiced smoke in half.
Taking me by arm, firm on my shoulder,

you showed me how so like fields we are,
broken, tended, yielding—how lucky
it is we are level, standing,
ready now on any kind of ground.