

“A Memory”

My father's corn is knee-high for the Fourth
and his left side is stronger,
but he hasn't whipped
the grass into shape
and he broods
about a brassy hen pheasant
that flutters into his dreams
to nest on his heart.

He likes her,
he likes her better than all those
damn pills the doctor makes him buy!
Twice one night she got him up
but that's all right—
he ate cereal in the moonlight,
and walked in the long grass, drifting back
to his father's farm.

There was new snow on the ground
and Brownie, the collie, lay covered with it.

Barefoot
he went out
and reached under
to feel her, to make sure she was breathing,
and to say, Come to bed,
I have a nice fat hen
who will keep us warm.