

On Berry-Picking in the Salvage Field

Wading through the tall hard grass
She pauses thoughtfully, listening to
 The burst of meadowlarks

White and blinding
The summer Kansas sun chases her
 Into the tangle
 Of blackberry bushes

Small, methodical hands work delicately
Pinching tiny jewels of fruit from morning branches

 Then into the bucket
 Into the cold
 Into the pie
 Into open, waiting mouths

 Waiting hands
 That once worked
 The dry prairie soil

Now all that remains are silent machines
Surrounding her with brittle rust
 And time
 And age

 Vestiges of a pride
 Long turned to ash

As the tombs of those whose hopes careened
Through windshields bear witness to her hands
Stained in black and violet Life ...