

## What Remains by Julia Meylor Simpson



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Cover art by Gerald J. Meylor  
Painting on family barn

**Origami Poetry Projects**

**What Remains**

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### Racing a Tornado on Gravel

Jagged rage flicks overhead,  
grumbles in primal throat.  
Maddened cloaks of sea green  
shroud tunnels of tall corn.  
Tuck headlights skitter over  
splintered cottonwood sentries.  
You look back at rosy sunset,  
then grin clutch  
spit gravel.

### Landmark

The windmill  
in the south pasture  
marked the corner  
to turn north  
for the farm place.  
Deep breaths  
of wind made  
wide paddles whir,  
scaffold tremble,  
metal scream  
against metal  
as it roused  
unstrid darkness.  
As it leaned  
against nothing.

Today, eyes sweep flat-line horizon.  
Nothing stands to shout: Turn here!  
Not even a severed skeleton defies  
baked blue sky. So you just drive on.

### Heading Home from Omaha

Take Mormon Bridge east  
over Big Muddy's flowing skirt.  
Cottonwoods rustle.

Two asphalt ribbons  
uncurl as Iowa shimmers.  
Turn on cruises, A.C.

Soybeans-pond-hayfield-  
cornfield-cornfield-town-cornfield:  
wide blue sky unfenced.

Sun slides below grain  
edging everything in gold.  
Even rental car.

Turn at Sioux City.  
Stars, farm lights flick on ahead.  
Forty miles to go.

### What Remains

In this emptied-out place  
of hot white light and rich black earth,  
in this hallowed place  
of giving up and moving on,  
in this sacred place  
of remembering and returning,  
only the wind remains  
to tell our stories,  
to whisper our names,  
to save our souls.