

How might I be loved?

With a song to answer or match my song? Can there be such a thing as a love head-on, or only another at one's side striding?

And if I were to be loved (for I too am most sorrowfully unskilled) would I know it?



Sheila Murphy

JONES' BLUEBERRY FARM

We would drive out east of Mishawaka,
past the hand-painted sign that read "U-Pick"
loop our belts through bucket handles, fasten them.

We would listen to a withered foreman
in a red cap
who barked, "Pick 'em clean!"

He would assign us one bush at a time,
a bush someone had given up on.
We would reach way in to gather a small handful
that made a dull thud on the bottom of the pail.

The blueberry patch contained a feast of eavesdropping.
We could walk in on someone's real life,
listen to a living soap opera
blue as our stained hands.

Sun gleamed on the old man's red cap.

Across the aisle from us were rich bushes
laden with berries
reminding us of delicious baked goods.

We used to take my aunt and uncle with us
to Jones' Blueberry Farm.

It was the only place where we could laugh and get along.
In that fertile farmland, each of us believed
what she needed to believe.

Mother decided that her younger sister
had married a nice man,
capable of warm conversation.

My aunt could tell herself that she was doing my mother
a favor by driving us to Jones' Blueberry Farm,
exaggerating her share of the work.

Mother would take up where God left off, select
perfect ingredients for cobbler, muffins, pies,
that would turn bastards like my in-law uncle
into charming people.

There is no trick to being gracious
when someone feeds you homemade pie.

We held the memory
of a field laden with beautiful thick fruit,
kept returning to Jones' Blueberry Farm,
our freezer stuffed full of the goodness there.

We were swayed by its abundance, its simplicity.

We could concentrate on feeding ourselves
and believe for a little while this was our only job,
that ours were plain, good lives.

While there, we thought of nothing but the blueberries,
juicy and delicious.

When we paid the cashier on the way out,
the hot sun poured down on our upholstery
We looked out the car windows
at bees humming around the fruit.

And it was dusty on the drive to Perkins Road.