LAST TRIP TO THE ISLAND

BY: ERIN BELIEU

You're mad that I can't love the ocean,

but I've come to this world landlocked

and some bodies feel permanently strange.

Like any foreign language, study it too late and

it never sticks. Anyway,

we're here aren't we? --

trudging up the sand, the water churning

its constant horny noise, an openmouthed heavy

breathing made more unnerving by

the presence of all these families, the toddlers

with their chapped bottoms, the fathers

in gigantic trunks spreading out their dopey

circus-colored gear.

How can anyone relax

near something so worked up all the time?

I know the ocean is glamorous,

but the hypnosis, the dilated pull of it, feels

impossible to resist. And what better reason to

resist? I'm most comfortable in

a field, a yellow-eared patch

of cereal, whose quiet rustling argues for

the underrated valor of discretion.

And above this, I admire a certain quality of

sky, like an older woman who wears her jewels with

an air of distance, that is, lightly,

with the right attitude. Unlike your ocean,

there's nothing sneaky about a field. I like their

ugly-girl frankness. I like that, sitting in the dirt,

I can hear what's coming between the stalks.