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America's Heartland

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e.a. gregor (she/her/hers) is a multidisciplinary artist and poet based in chicago. her work explores contrasts, communities, and nostalgia. she enjoys drinking cortados and experimenting with 35mm film. her poems have been published in glitchwords and the junebug journal.

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omaha—my first encounter with a city—
a place where suburbia thrives.
I grew up feeling “safe” and suffocated
by nuclear family ideals.

trees line each manicured block,
houses have the same forgettable features.
“amber waves of grain” hits differently here.
you can drive 10 minutes and find yourself near a stockyard,
the stench of cows lingers in the air.

there's a beauty in the simplicity here,
something comforting
in the predictability of a flyover state.
people grow up quickly,
rushing toward the pristine altar of family life.

there isn't much room for imagination or big dreams,
but damn, you sure have mastered small talk.
chain restaurants are often your best choice,
and grocery stores are large enough
to fit three carts in every aisle.

despite my lack of appreciation for america's heartland,

I never imagined I'd miss it so much
after more than a year without seeing my mom.
I've almost ordered omaha steaks three times since last march,
even though I've been a vegetarian for most of my life.

all summer, I craved fresh corn on the cob
and picking strawberries in the june sun.
I find myself missing drives to nowhere.
or even walking around the manmade lake
in my parents' subdivision.

oh, nebraska,
how I hate it there,
but nostalgia has a way of taking hold,
when all you want to do is hug your mom.



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