

Atlantic

Richard Coleman

She was explaining to me the finer points
of agriculture, the sustaining of life
on nutrients, fertilizers, and the
moist feel of healthy sod.

Plucking the thin shoots of prairie
grass, slipping them between her lips and whistling
the wind in from the fields.

She stands, raises her arms to the expressionless
sky, the turncoat mountains, the
butte with 49er names carved
deep in its layered sandstone;
she says there's a heart beating out there,
a frail touch of spirit in the cacti, in the scrub,
in the speeding dance of lizard.

She says that when she had her first child it grew and wandered
precariously across the rotted fences, and there was
always that fear that someday it would fall into
the newer barbed wire. And one day it
did. Then she drops her laden arms, filled with
specie of memory, and points again,
east. Out there, she says, out there
rides a scarred man on the atlantic.