

HOW TO CONVINCING YOUR MOTHER TO GIVE UP THE FARM

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We'll pack up your two hundred acres, your thirty-odd years
of home— blue birds in the nest box by the pond, the insatiable gaze
of the fox, flocks of wild turkeys, the satellite-dish ears
of deer outside windows at dawn. Breakables will be wrapped
carefully: memories hanging like icicles from eaves;

fog; horses snorting in winter, the plush of muzzles as they lean
from stalls. We'll press into paper spring grass in pastures,
and wildflowers—bloodroot, hepatica, dogtooth violets.

We'll preserve strawberries, blueberries, blackberries. The garden
can be put up in jars. We'll keep the idea of Hubbard squashes,

how they burgeon from manure piles with such giant dreams.

Autumn leaves—maple, beech, birch —can be dried into fiery seasonings,
and friends and neighbors can be smoked like hams — farmers,
farriers, vets, professors, and priests. Pancake breakfasts
at sugar houses can be ordered for take-out. We'll ferment the juiciest

gossip into sparkling wine; bubble wrap the last three chickens
and the last two cats, and if you want, also the skunks and bad luck—
frozen pipes, cracked bones. Ambulances. Mud, shit, sweat, drought,
in sickness and in health. We'll exhume the border collie struck dumb
by a car. Swaddle the arthritic ewe, the burnt bones of the ram,

stone-heaped graves of mare and ancient race horse. We'll digitize
crickets, cicadas, and silence. Furl up the farm poster:
sagging fences, slapdash outbuildings, the long trampled scarf
of a drive. As for the cauldron of night sky roiling with stars—
we'll roll it up like a carpet.