

Caught Gull, Plowing

Derk Koldewyn

At five, standing at the edge of the field,
Dad up there on the great green Deere,
I must have been scared he'd leave.
He made me an offer: Catch me a seagull
and I'll pay you five dollars. Then he roared
off, casting up a deep wake of firm earth.
When the gulls descended, I stalked, stretched
out in the valley of the furrow, inching toward
those nervous birds, intent. They'd flap, or
quickstep off, flustered. But there was one:
Unflappable, or dense, or careless, who knows?
I was there: one small mound of dirt and rock
between us: I held my breath, and lunged:
I came up empty, that gull skittered into the sky.
Dad tells it today for the inevitable laugh:
little boy blinded by greed crawls on his belly,
follows the plow. I tell it to tell you:
I almost had that gull by the throat.