

# The Way Back Home

*by* Michael Gillan Maxwell

500 miles

all the way from Omaha

nine hours  
on the back of a flatbed truck  
buffeted by hot wind  
that thrashed our bodies  
tied our hair into knots  
sucked the air  
right out of our lungs &  
ripped the voices  
from our lips  
we rolled on past fields  
of wheat and corn  
soy and hay  
the endless midwest landscape  
swallowed up by prairie and sky  
a spool unreeling, a banner unfurling  
time and space unwinding  
we played chess  
on a tiny magnetic board  
until you called checkmate  
about six hours out  
somewhere just past  
Des Moines

