

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

