

# Reading the Landscape

*Don't lose it—the ink line  
of Tussey Mountain's height*

*unspools above this valley,  
a loose wave of attention*

*pooling from a pen. It flows out  
above corn tassels, branching maples,*

*edges closer to the road you drive  
with every quarter mile. Like*

*a script style whose spindled lines  
and whorls the world left behind,*

*the mountain holds meaning  
at bay, keeps you tracing its outline*

*flickering behind tulip trees, lost  
to the curve of the road*

*across the valley floor. This country  
baffles you. The maze of ridges*

*drinks attention, masks distance,  
hems you in and eludes you. But the road*

*calls you forward. The ridgeline rises  
up to meet you just when you thought it gone.*

**Julie Swarstad Johnson**