

At the site of the Laurelton Village for Feeble-minded Girls of Childbearing Age

No ghosts. Only witness trees
casting dark on lawns. Cool nets.

Rustles above, alongside.
Where the fields were, maybe,

green beans, cukes, tomatoes.
Where the grass now sways hip-high,

hips in cotton dresses swayed.
Where the orchards: pear, plum, apple.

Baskets of them in arms.
Where stone was lifted and made

an institution.
Porches painted white.

Can't you see the ones called morons
mending dresses,

idiots shelling peas.
the deviant

berry-pickers, water-fetchers,
milkers of cows,

and those incorrigibles
who couldn't be trusted

with a shovel,
weeding the long rain-loosened rows

on hands and knees? Scrubbing floors,
hanging sheets to flap

and then by supper
spread again on beds.

Can't you see yourself
standing inside the corn

grown higher than faces?
How you might watch the whores

and nulliparae dance
like boys and girls,

music drifting
from open windows, curtains wafting

as if in a film and you alone
in knowing what you were

missing? No one seems to notice.
no one bashing through stalks to lead you

back by the ordinary arm.

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