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Northern Hills

by Steven Frattali

The sun above the hushed and burning hills. . .

Domes of the silos flash in midday heat.
Against the distant yellow-green hay field
A bright green tractor is an aphid on a leaf.

I walk along the side of the highway.
The air above the melting asphalt strip
Quivers vividly like high octane fumes.

Farms cluster on the northern New York hills,
Hills cut and broken by their smooth highways
Or crossed by patched and rough macadam roads

Where loose stones spatter the car's underside,
Where blackberry and burdock choke the ditch
And cabbage whites in dreaming pasture air

Float in the bright sun. The upland lot
Is full of boulders and crab apple trees
And bounded with a rusted wire fence.

There on a listing grey fence post—rain-gnawed,
With moss along one side—a paper sign,
Yellow and rain-spotted, stiff and parchment warped,

Informs you Private Property. Keep Out.