

Barbed Wire

by Todd Davis

Its rust bleeds with dying leaves, circles
this pasture like a crown of thorns.

What was so valuable that we thought
the threat of pain could protect it?

Some farmer in Illinois convinced
the rest of us to believe in twisted wire,

jagged barbs, and now there are no
more split-rail fences: only fields

giving way to long stretches of road,
prairie divided by metal posts

and macadam, lines of wire pulled
tight around what we think is ours.