

Crows Over Wheatfield

Poetry by Jennifer Woodworth

after Vincent Van Gogh's last painting

I lay down at the end
of that rust-red vein,
drowning in blue, when the crows

came to steal the wheat, the sun, our
art, our lives. They came like the storm we knew
would come. Wings beating thunder, heavy

with hail. We were beaten,
weren't we, blue and black
crows stealing light

from your colors and
mine. But you were so much braver
than I. I hid my face behind my hands,

and lost all vision while you
risked your whole life
with open eyes. Bolts of wheat leapt from the earth

in yellow paint below the storm. You fought, too,
to keep the light, enough to paint this last—

and you lived and died then and no crows stole

your art. The blue did not beat
you in the end; you made fierce love to her
with thick strokes of paint and fell asleep
forever in her salt-water arms. And I lived—
to wander along your three red roads,
looking forever for the crumbs of my dark art, forsaken by crows
behind your howling stalks of wheat.