

Kansas, Awakening

Walk the early green
fields and run your fingers
across the wheat's whiskers
and you will know this land
is not ours, but we belong
to these fields and this simple
dirt, and when we shake hands--
rough hands, smooth hands--we can
feel that heat, blood run
through the blue-green chutes
of the heart. This land
pulses with us--the city
office towers with their yellow
lights always on,
the wind turbines, pinwheeling
to the breath of God,
the Main Street teens, music
up, windows down,
dragging that strip of blacktop
in the night in a one light town--
and at dawn the sidewalks
full of noisy kids
in backpacks with lunch sacks
walking to the yellow buses
that honk hope
and to the tough-shouldered
grain elevator, its white pillars
and ribs, that flashes
a lonely light, but holds
abundant, golden grain--
to all these and more
we say welcome: you belong
to this state, like we do, somewhere
in the middle, at the heart
of a body awakening
and coming into its own.

Poem by Kevin Rabas, Poet Laureate of Kansas 2017-2019, in honor of the inauguration of Laura Kelly, 48th Governor of Kansas.
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