

[et_pb_section admin_label="section"][et_pb_row admin_label="row"][et_pb_column type="4_4"][et_pb_audio admin_label="Audio" audio="http://www.johnfitz.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/01-Joshua-Sawyer.mp3" title="Joshua Sawyer" artist_name="John Fitzsimmons" album_name="Fires in the Belly" background_layout="light" background_color="#ffffff" use_border_color="off" border_color="#ffffff" border_style="solid"] [/et_pb_audio][et_pb_text admin_label="Text" background_layout="light" text_orientation="left" use_border_color="off" border_color="#ffffff" border_style="solid"]

I doubt I'd ever have taken this road
had I known how fallen it really was
to disrepair: driving comically,
skirting ruts and high boulders, grimacing
at every bang on the oil pan.
I tell you it's the old road to Wendell —
that they don't make them like this anymore.

We're bound by curious obligations,
and so stop by an old family plot
walled in by piles of jumbled fieldstone,
cornered to the edge of what once was field.
The picket gateway still stands intact,
somebody propped up leaning on a stick,
an anonymous gesture of reverence.
Only nature disrespects: toppling stone,
bursting with suckers and wild raggedness.
A gravestone, schist of worn slate, leans weathered:

Joshua Sawyer Died Here 1860

Another stone, cracked, has fallen over.
I reset the stone, and scrape the caked earth
as if studying some split tortoise shell,
and have keyed in to a distant birth —
His wife Ruth died young; so I picture him
stern with his only daughter, only child —
speaking for a faith which could defy her.
There'd be no passing onto when she died —
twenty-two, more words beside her mother.
Still these stones and fields you kept in order,
long days spent forcing sharp turns on nature,
accepting the loose stone and thin topsoil.

A Wendell neighbor must have buried you
whispering a eulogy which is as lost
as your daughter, your wife, and this farm:

—*Joshua Sawyer*

I've never been down this road before
I would like to speak with you of faith.

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