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## Bits and Pieces of Our Land

Marvin Bell

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## Bits and Pieces of Our Land / Marvin Bell

One day you will put it together  
the way they do the world  
in the globe shop.

Meanwhile, you can see:  
the compass plant points to the barnswallow  
and a piece of prairie

might edge the road. In your mind,  
no state bird, no tree,  
but finch and sparrow cluster

in willow, ash, or hardwood  
here and there; then,  
others, elsewhere.

It's not that the land can't  
make up its mind  
to be a place for grass or bush,

timber or rock. The land thinks  
by watching you look around;  
in its stopped-down time

it will become what you want it  
to be, and then become  
all that it wanted you to.

It is something to see:  
the way it is turning us over  
in your thoughts or mine.

## A Goldfinch / Marvin Bell

The Baltimore oriole, seldom an Iowan,  
was last thought seen to be bathing