

# Endless

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M.E. Carnes

Small town with dirt roads  
that seem to go on endlessly,  
cradled in between fields  
filled with crops  
corn  
    soybeans  
corn  
    soybeans  
rows that curve to the shape of the Earth

Men dressed in flannel,  
with muddy boots.  
Chew dribbling from the corners  
of their mouths.  
Women barefoot  
in the kitchen.  
Bellies round with life,  
hands left pruned from soapy water.

Men do hard labor,  
    women always in labor.

I'm driving down these endless roads,  
searching for somewhere better to reside.  
Setting fire to the apron  
that has my name printed on it.

Y'alls and darlins'  
still drip from my tongue,  
but the only life  
that I allow to take root  
in me is the one left by books.  
The words strung together,  
shaking my world,  
shaping my world.