

Love in the Western World

Think of family, Ulster Irish
run out on a ram's horn,
our first real move.
the same square hands
ploughing through Missouri
And Iowa and Minnesota,
where we learned to muffle
the cavities of the body,
batten the heart down
on loneliness. Still it beats
family, family, as if the pulse
of our one-to-a-body rivers
ever ran singular. And if nothing
continues – the body ending
in this fist, everything short
of the mark – what do we want?
Don't give me history. No bridges
from my heart to your heart
to all of them stringing back
like dark berries: only
open my hand, press it
for the feel of the river,
the old fishline unreeling again.

--Kathy Callaway