Contents

SURE SIGNS

Selecting a Reader 3
First Snow 4
An Old Photograph 5
The Constellation Orion 6
The Salesman 7
Old Soldiers’ Home 8
Self-Portrait at Thirty-Nine 9
Christmas Eve 10
Visiting Mountains 11
The Leaky Faucet 12
A Frozen Stream 13
Living Near the Rehabilitation Home 14
Late February 15
A Drive in the Country 17
Spring Plowing 18
Sitting All Evening Alone in the Kitchen 19
Sure Signs 20
A Summer Night 21
In a Country Cemetery in Iowa 22
The Man with the Hearing Aid 23
The Very Old 24
Walking Beside a Creek 25
Book Club 26
At the End of the Weekend  28
Uncle Adler  29
In the Corners of Fields  30
How to Make Rhubarb Wine  31
Late Lights in Minnesota  33
The Afterlife  34
A Widow  35
So This Is Nebraska  36
Fort Robinson  38
How to Foretell a Change in the Weather  39
Snow Fence  41
In an Old Apple Orchard  42
An Empty Place  43
After the Funeral: Cleaning Out the Medicine Cabinet  44
The Grandfather Cap  45
Shooting a Farmhouse  46
Beer Bottle  48
Sleeping Cat  49
North of Alliance  50
Late September  51
Carrie  52
For a Friend  53
Grandfather  54
Looking for You, Barbara  55
Pocket Poem  56
Moles  57
Notes on the Death of Nels Paulssen, Farmer, at the Ripe Old Age of 93  58
Advice 59
After My Grandmother’s Funeral 60
A Hot Night in Wheat Country 61
Five p.m. 62
Abandoned Farmhouse 63
The Blind Always Come as Such a Surprise 64
Furnace 65
West Window 66
Boarding House 67
A Letter from Aunt Belle 68
At the Bait Stand 69
The Tattooed Lady 70
A Death at the Office 71
There Is Always a Little Wind 72
The Widow Lester 73
Houses at the Edge of Town 74
The Old Woman 75
A Place in Kansas 76
Tom Ball’s Barn 77
My Grandfather Dying 78
The Red Wing Church 79
Highway 30 80
Birthday 81
The Failed Suicide 82
The Goldfish Floats to the Top of His Life 83
They Had Torn Off My Face at the Office 84
Year’s End 85
New Year’s Day 86
Walking to Work  87
Sunday Morning  88

ONE WORLD AT A TIME

Flying at Night  91
A Fencerow in Early March  92
Just Now  93
A Birthday Card  94
In the Basement of the Goodwill Store  95
Camera  96
A Room in the Past  97
In January, 1962  98
Tillage Marks  99
A Child’s Grave Marker  100
Father  101
At Midnight  104
Central  105
The Fan in the Window  106
Myrtle  107
Daddy Longlegs  108
Good-bye  109
The Giant Slide  110
A Roadside Shrine in Kansas  111
Decoration Day  112
A Monday in May  113
A Buffalo Skull  114
Laundry  115
The Mouse  116
Ladder 117
Walking at Noon Near the Burlington Depot in Lincoln, Nebraska 118
A Patch of Sunlight 120
Carp 121
At the Center 122
A Sunset 123
The Ride 124
At Nightfall 125
At the Office Early 126
Cleaning a Bass 127
An Empty Shotgun Shell 128
A Quarter Moon Just Before Dawn 129
A Letter 130
Latvian Neighborhood 131
The Voyager II Satellite 132
The Witness 133
As the President Spoke 134
The Pitch 135
The Sigh 136
The Onion Woman 137
Hobo Jungle 138
An August Night 139
The Urine Specimen 140
Geronimo’s Mirror 141
Porch Swing in September 142