

**Joyce Wilson**

**Field Trip**

I drove to the dilapidated farm  
Where unpaved roads had lost themselves in mud.  
The creek was there, like rivers in my dreams,  
That twisted in the eddies of its flood.

I brought my parents' books of naturalists  
With tattered covers, many pages curled,  
Their guide to link descriptions to the field  
Where we observed the corresponding world.

A tiny bluish-purple slip appeared.  
I plucked it by the stem, and put it down  
To look at it, by bending close to view  
Serrations of the leaf and petal crown.

I scanned the index of my fragile guide,  
Where drawings ran and pages rose and fell.  
As I compared the profile to the thing,  
Imagined waves soon took me in their swell.

I sank through spaces in between the leaves  
Where past and present lessons intertwine,  
While images and imitations swirl,  
And mirrors of existences combine

And saw how much this wispy petal shape  
Resembled tongues, or wavelets in a brook,  
Or tufts of hair, or shavings from a plank.  
"It's called Bluecurls," I said, and closed the book,

Remembering my parents and this flame  
Of baby blue that through them I had learned  
To see and sound, identify and name,  
Forgotten till today when I returned.

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The lessons that they fostered festered in  
My memory, as good as dispossessed,  
Until the source ignited once again:  
A tiny flower with a purple crest.