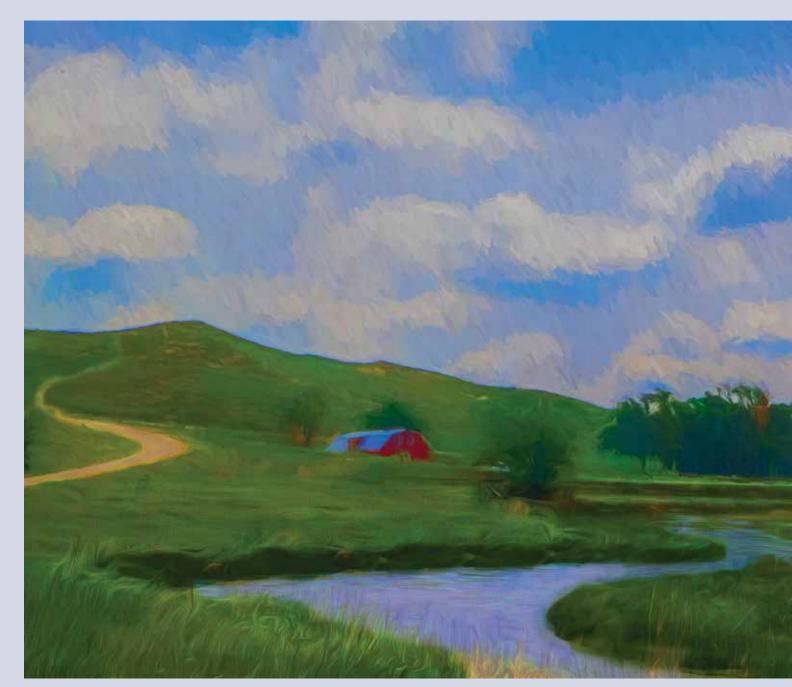
Road-tripping

The Middle Loup River flows
almost flush to the land, held in place
by an occasional chalky bank.
Little more than a stream in spots,
it runs south of the highway
beyond the tracks. Every so often
a coal train rumbles by, too many
cars for us to count.

Soon we cross the same river again, the train tracks switched now to the highway's northern side.
Suddenly both tracks and river disappear. In an impromptu game of hide-and-seek, we spot a stand of cottonwoods at river's edge out beyond a powdered khaki field.

Clouds stamped on a vivid sky
throw shadows on docile hills.
We pass through Mullen, Thedford,
Halsey, hop-scotching the Middle Loup.
Down the highway we are drawn
by limestone spires to Saint Anselm's,
Cathedral of the Sandhills. We stop
for a moment to collect our joys.



Kim Sosin, Impressions of the Middle Loup

-Janet McMillan Rives

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