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Flint Hills Trails

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FLINT HILLS TRAILS

Across the Flint Hills, the clouds roll south
Pushed by the north wind, leaving a white trail
Against the blue.

Even in this quiet place, we've left our own trails,
Our asphalt scars, our grassy wheelmarks,
Our ponies' tread, the skid of our travois,
Our lines of fence and limestone wall.

If everything that crossed here left a trail,
These plains would be a forest of paths:
The grasshopper's erratic flop, the bumble's search,
The hawk's swift dive, the kite's hover and swoop,
The redwing blackbird's upward leap.

Long before, great sea creatures swam,
Drifted, moved along, above the sandy floor;
Leaving, not tracks, but bodies,
Sifting shells and coral that built the limestone
From which we built our walls.

Now, walking these hills, you brush a path
Through waves of ancient seas and shoulder-high bluestem,
Crowded, empty, silent, full of calling voices;
The distant past and the still, shining moment.

Kim Stanley is a professor of English at McPherson College and a speaker and discussion leader for Humanities Kansas. Her primary interest is in helping people tell their stories.



The Conestoga Storm
Zak Barnes