

What Will Happen

to this
carved out place, once
rough and undisturbed, now
fallen, sparse, already
a remnant from lives
lost to the inexorable? Who
will care that such care was
taken to choose for this path
limestone, of the type layered
with traces of an ancient winding
river, rather than one pocked with fossil
remains in bands of buff clay? Or, that
this fence-line transected a prairie
parcel here, or that this mix of mineral
supplements for beef cattle was blended
to satisfy this percentage, instead of that? Who
will burn the invasive hedge, cedar, smooth
brome, the buckthorn? Who will remember
which of these hills hold burial mounds for the Kansa,
Wichita, Pawnee? Who will keep the skeleton
key for the district common school,
a replica, open it for tours? Who will
make the time to deadhead the fading
wild irises, keep the open range
road graded, the bison skull hanging
on the barn from slipping
off its nail?

— from *Ghost Heart*