

Consider the lilies of the field,
the blue banks of camas opening
into acres of sky along the road.

Would the longing to lie down
and be washed by that beauty
abate if you knew their usefulness,
how the natives ground their bulbs
for flour, how the settlers' hogs
uprooted them, grunting in gleeful
oblivion as the flowers fell?

And you--what of your rushed and
useful life? Imagine setting it all down—
papers, plans, appointments, everything—
leaving only a note:

"Gone to the fields to be lovely.
Be back when I'm through with blooming."

Even now, unneeded and uneaten
the camas lilies gaze out above the grass
from their tender blue eyes.
Even in sleep your life will shine.
Make no mistake. Of course
your work will always matter.
Yet Solomon in all his glory
was not arrayed like one of these.

--Lynn Ungar