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Blue Sailors, and: *Les bleuets*

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## *Les bleuets*

Long after the waters recede  
 and the shell shards have dispersed,  
 they rise like Lazarus beneath  
 the steady blade of a spring wind.

Here, among clover and corn,  
 east of the Missouri,  
 hurtsickle, *notre petits bleuets*,  
 crown every meadow ridge with light;

even the farmers  
 and reapers know  
 best lay down your scythe  
 before nature's adamant blue.

In Egypt, women assemble in the valley,  
 hands glimmering in the sun like two iron crescents.  
 They've come to harvest papyrus, lotus, and oxtongue,  
 stitch them into a funeral collar

of youthful cornflower,  
 which the sem priest ceremoniously places  
 upon the boy king's innermost sarcophagus.  
 One day he'll return a bashful bachelor,

a wide-eyed French soldier  
 no more than twenty,  
 ragged robin pinned to his breast,  
 newly home from the western front.