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Blueberries

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At the Mennonite auction, flats of blueberries, whole and plump, big as nickels, tempt me. My hand itches to filch one or two off the top-heavy pint closest to me. Just to hold its taste on my tongue; let its sour melt into sweetness, with my eyes closed. I know how to savor stolen fruit from god-fearing farmers whose fingernails hold that trace of dirt like mine. We've each had our share. Two lots away, an auctioneer yammers a confusion of dollars and cents, nodding at tickets that bid in a wink, a grunt, a shrug. Someone smiles; another flicks his ticket against his pant leg and purses his lips. A barefoot baby girl in a purple cotton dress has danced on tiptoe over to my lot. She sees what I want and wants it too. One or two blueberries is all she takes before her grandmother notices what she's done. Best not to make a scene, the grandmother takes the baby's hand and leads her away, unaware that her blue-eyed girl with honey-straw pigtailed looks back over her shoulder and grins at me.



M. J. Iuppa