

BROKEN WIND by Brian Doherty
(after Barley Fields on the Other Side of the Mountain, 2017)

I do not understand why you English
find the name of my home village amusing.

It would take too long to explain
all of the meanings in my native tongue.

Tibet, I am from Tibet; yes, I grew up
in Nepal like many of my compatriots.

You have heard of the Dalai Lama?
Yes, our leader, living in exile in Nepal.

Because the Chinese captured Tibet in 1950,
claiming we have always been part of China.

About as true as Mexico being part of USA,
or Georgia being a province of Russia.

Anyway, our wind is broken by the mountain,
no, not Everest, K2, or Kanchenjunga,

but the one China has built around us.
Most days you cannot see it, unless trucks

full of soldiers come and take our fathers
and brothers away for re-education.

Some never return, and the wind snatches
their words away. And meanwhile, the barley

in our fields must be harvested, no matter
the weather, wind or sun, both, or neither.

We never know how far our words will be
carried, but they will never break our breath.