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Blueberry Picking, 1972

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Blueberry Picking, 1972

Not the berries at first but the bright smell
of pine needles warm in the afternoon.
Sun awake in the blue, late-summer sky.

A crackling Southern drawl, an elderly
grandmother announcing plans to make
jam. Slant light seeping through thick aspens.

The first blueberry pings the pail's
emptiness, begins the slow filling up.
Smooth skin steeped in deep purple.

Grandchildren, pails full, laughing together
among the briars. Years later,

alcoholism, divorce, suicide, and still
the sweet, ripe, indigo taste.

Fredric Hildebrand is a retired physician living in Neenah, WI. He is the author of two poetry chapbooks, Northern Portrait (Kelsay Books, 2020), and A Glint of Light (Finishing Line Press, 2020). His recent poetry has appeared in The MacGuffin and Third Wednesday.