



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHAEL CAVANAGH

*Michael Cavanagh (<https://www.grinnell.edu/users/cavanagh>), Professor Emeritus of English, was raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, but has taught his favorite authors, mainly poets, at Grinnell, for almost four decades. He has spent much of that time trying to make peace with Iowa, not an easy thing to do for a Californian. In this endeavor his granddaughter Kate Cavanagh has helped. Cavanagh's book on Seamus Heaney, *Professing Poetry* (<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/20889>), came out in 2009. He has just finished a book on John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, geared to first-time readers of that fabulous poem. Cavanagh's poems have appeared in several magazines.*

## A Girl's Song For Kate

MICHAEL CAVANAGH

Whenever I think of leaving home  
And being anywhere but here,  
I see clouds like soft potatoes  
And rains with their droplets watering my hills.  
Whenever I hear the hateful wind blow dirt along the roads  
I hear cardinals singing in the bare trees.  
Whenever I feel I want to be alone  
I think about that poor cottonwood in the next field.  
Whenever I think about my Grandma and Grandpa  
Who are gone from sight,  
I think of a sky you can see anytime.  
Once in my dreams I was in that sky.  
I heard a beautiful voice below me.  
I shot from the sky in a blaze  
To a place just outside my bedroom window  
Where now I stand,  
Where I love being a girl,  
Where someday I will be a woman,  
With my feet on the ground,  
Looking up always at the sky,  
In Iowa.