

Poetry Porch: Poetry

By Hilary Sallick

the world

What are you gathering I asked
She was crouched on the patchy
ground beside the path
a gardener's pad under her knees
and searching among the weeds
and grasses then dropping
some bits she found
into a wicker basket
She looked up I saw
her face under the brim
of her farmer's hat serious
not unfriendly around my age
which is to say not young almost old
with gray-brown hair
falling and framing
her gaze graceful under
that hat
and she said *Cigarette butts and
bits of broken glass*
Of course I thought to myself
given the place and time
and aloud I said *I was hoping
it was something wholesome
nuts fallen from a tree* though
I didn't speak that last part which
would have shown the depth
of my ignorance just thanked her

and moved on so she could resume
her work to make the world
a bit better I too
sometimes pick up trash
from the sidewalk or curb but mostly
I'm looking up
at the sky