

GENESIS

Jim, we have cradled grain
In a golden shock,
Beheaded the green snake
On a black rock,
Circled the scared colt
In a trained ring,
And raked the autumn smoke
Toward spring.

Spry as a green farm
We ran in loud
Hums from the curious large
Animal crowd,
Yet backward turned our eyes
On neighborhoods
Of yielding mysteries
In rank woods:

On screaming chicken hawks
And weasel bones,
Armies of warring ants
Under stones,
On bulls and studs and boars,
Roosters and rams,
And coarsely flopping colts.
And delicate lambs.

Particulars in view
Were muddy sows,
The white madonna ewes,
Rubbery cows,
Arch apprehensive mares
Flaring in pens,
Our own flickering eyes
And the dancing hens.

Beyond these always trot
Shy girls and boys
Who ran in the shade of God
Under bright noise
Of hungry mornings, fed
With the weedy shout
Of summer. And wild meadows.
And silvery trout.

DRY GRASS

The hayfield whispers as I walk
Each midnight hour up this hill
To tell the autumn wind such talk
And nonsense as I will.
I mark the sumac by the moon
And tear the withered grass to show
How crisp stems crackle, and how soon
The searching fingers know
Beyond old callouses and tough
Thin tentacles of nerve that this
Is death again.

I like that rough
Sharp certainty that is
Portion of hand and part of mind.
For if, sometimes, I run in fear,
Bewildered, questioning and blind,
At least I have death here,
Real in my human hand. It
Is reassuring, being clean
And common to my autumn wit
And in my memory, green.

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