

## Three Poems



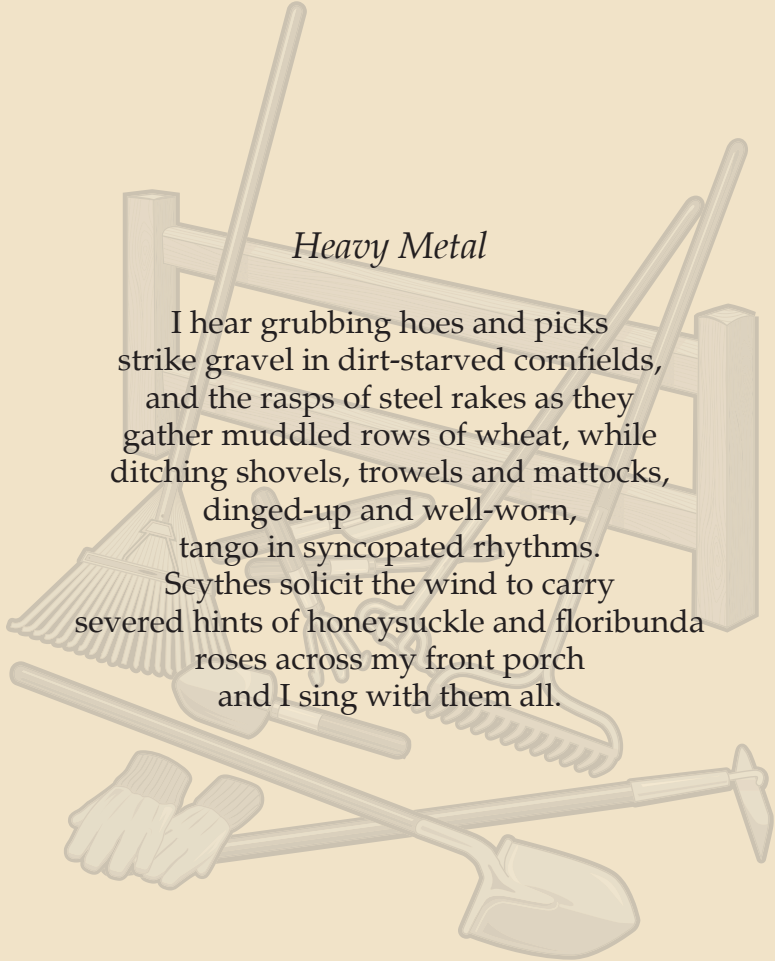
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### *Where I Come From*

Afternoon rain slowly released downtown  
from the summer's sweltering grip,  
steam rose from damp asphalt, blanketing  
roads in the syrupy scents of petroleum.  
I paused at the stop sign in my Chevy Corvair,  
noticed the weather-beaten woman,  
face drawn and wrinkled with age,  
sitting in the upstairs window  
of her faded clapboard apartment.  
The cigarette stub was squeezed tight  
between raggedy teeth as she took communion  
from a casual breeze. I watched her blow  
trouble away through hole after hole,  
until my thoughts turned home.  
It meant nothing to me at the time,  
only later would I call her beautiful.

### *Heavy Metal*



I hear grubbing hoes and picks  
strike gravel in dirt-starved cornfields,  
and the rasps of steel rakes as they  
gather muddled rows of wheat, while  
ditching shovels, trowels and mattocks,  
dinged-up and well-worn,  
tango in syncopated rhythms.  
Scythes solicit the wind to carry  
severed hints of honeysuckle and floribunda  
roses across my front porch  
and I sing with them all.

*Infinite Occasion*

Our town grows thin as the wind dies  
and temperatures tip one-hundred degrees.  
Inside cafes and diners, coke water rests  
in uncollected tumblers while businessmen  
pull their office doors for afternoon napping  
and secretaries tiptoe in stocking feet  
along linoleum floors for any reason  
to create a breeze.

In the poplar-shaded houses, white women  
draw bedroom sheers and browse  
Sears mail order catalogs as black women  
finally take a seat in front of ironing boards  
and leftover meatloaf to watch the Lowell  
families create havoc on *As the World Turns*.

Outside of town, dirt yards bake  
while pockmarked fields bloom litter  
and weeds. Summer vacationers bound  
on long, hot daydreams to Florida  
looking for service at Stuckey's and Shells  
zoom by the porch-rocking families  
shelling peas and shucking corn.  
Tomorrow, it will all come again.