

# Studio One

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## The Farm Woman

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## THE FARM-WOMAN

It's not the same.

Sunset is too organized.

The flame rising in the night  
is a show for businessmen's children.

The true fire is no more.

The light is merely wind-blown ashes.

She outlived her husband and her strength,  
moved into town, first a small apartment,  
then a nursing home.

Saying goodbye to her made me wince.

I couldn't sense anything in her  
to convince me she wouldn't be dead tomorrow.

I remember a land of endless yellow patches,  
the color closest to brightness.

From a plane above,  
passengers could see the artistry of farmers at work,  
a fabulous quilt, two hundred miles wide, a hundred across.

For years, steadily, through the best and worst weather,  
from lush times to when drought had no answers –  
quilt was a good name for it.

It kept tired people safe and warm.

She'd often sigh how a way of life was dying.  
And now I drive by the old place,  
and am dismayed by all the corporate tractors  
giving burial their best shot.  
Progress is merciless. Her fears have come to be.

Driving by siloes huge as moon rockets,  
bigger but fewer towns,  
simple gifts turned to big paydays,  
I have visions of the edges of her mouth,  
smiling out of habit  
and the glow of her wrinkled eyes,  
stubborn in her suffering:  
It pains me to think  
that nothing good came of that.

John Grey