

Farm

By Helena Trifillis

In the metal silo coarsely powdered grains rush into a giant basin.
I imagine them pouring over me-a rush of particles, frighteningly constant and innumerable. I'd lie flat like the Vitruvian Man. Stream over me, bury me in particles until I become shapeless. I want to hide in the darkness forever, my lungs collapsing under millions of grains. The heavy burden of mechanical labor. Dust rises from the basin, visible only in the thin slits of sunlight that pierce through everything they touch like spectral knives.
That's not fair. I was supposed to be so dark under the weight of all those grains.

The only escape from the light is the shifting of the day and as the hours tick away into twilight I know my solace is only temporary. Each new day brings the peaking of the sun and its harsh fluorescence that highlights all the cracks in the crust. What kind of slaughterhouse have we built for ourselves on the outskirts of this collective conscience? One with sterile walls. The edges of my mind cut like a disinfected scalpel. You can't see the blood anymore but if you lick the quiet silver handle you could still taste a hint.

I walk through the fields observing the majestic cows with their large, bewitching eyes that glisten in the slanted sunlight. I wonder if they know what they're in for. One looks at my face with the expired trust of an animal who eats the grass offered by the same hand that will put a gun to its head when it can no longer yield calcium. Struck by the tired whip of conditional mercy. Brown hide against tan wheat grass. Our mutual gaze solidifies a tortured acceptance and I'm the one who has to turn away.
Sentience is a gilded curse.

Face the rolling hills, I wonder if they are forgiving of my obvious humanity as I trample over them. If these blades of grass could talk, they'd scream-but as though they were being forced underwater, choked out, their grievances violently repressed.

The great mower beheads those who dare stand tall. These things the trees have seen but can never tell. Their secrets taken to the grave as they are shipped off to the lumber yard and ripped apart. We destroy all that is good and beautiful in this world and the gravity of our affliction is sometimes too much to bear.

I continue on.

I am crossing a visceral threshold that exists only in the realm of my perception. If you take a walk in my mind you will see tall trees that scrape the surface of a black, gridded sky. I cannot go beyond, so I venture farther into my forest.

I return with a Gestaltian mentality-to be a part of this world, is to be the world. We humans disrupt the requisite balance by injecting our unresolved suffering into the Earth. All life is the same, we are born and die in cycles. I envy the boulders that will long surpass my lifetime, for them the future is not just a concept. I reside in an indeterminate state of torpor under the sky, lying flat on the Earth, melded with the soft reaching grass.

I lie immobilized like the broken down queen of a crumbling statue world.

But when I rise...

When the hay is removed, and the tender earth shows itself, I shake the dust from the folds of my pants, look up at my Golden Enemy and descant:

Dear Sun, just because you are burning doesn't mean you must set us all on fire. You set the world ablaze with your golden hues that travel through layers of atmosphere to ignite this summer's day. I don't fear you because you are powerful. I fear you because you are good.

And when I crawl out from my shadowy corner and look out at the pulsating blue sky, I see all life beneath it that you control. I know you will want to paint the tips of the swishing grasses and plant your oily glow. But it is not enough to pacify the blunted mind that propels my tongue to curse your brilliance. Plastered high above horse and flower, you magnify the beauty of a world you have fostered for so long, since a dawning I have not seen but relive with each coming day. So I step into your afternoon ray and let you sew gold into the roots of my hair and illuminate my crooked face. I can feel you directing your power towards me, piercing light through my opaque skull to bring forth a goodness that is just not there.