



the lowlands reader

As South Dakota farmscape  
changes into exotic  
Picasso prints on a  
patchwork tradition,  
I dream of the hundreds  
of gowns I would sew  
for Aphrodite

the midnight 1949 Chevrolet pick-up  
gave you and me a county fair ride  
to the Platte River  
to your secret oasis  
the wheat and corn fields  
rasped a breezy blues  
in the background  
in the prairie  
through your *vin du pays* glasses  
our heads dazzled  
with the intoxicating grape rays  
of an expiring sun  
of running out beams  
upon the touch  
of the Platte River current  
we became water kites  
we became water clouds  
in an aqueous sky  
drifting and pulled  
to the whims of a spirit water father  
it was more than the river  
more than its summer satiated waters  
flowing about us

Thanks  
To Russ Cole



it was a return  
of our unborn being  
then as the cool dark gusks  
squeezed our arms and legs  
with their raw embraces  
we ran to the county ride truck  
and drove home  
in a generator warmed silence



## The Camera Eye (two)

*With Apologies  
to John Dos Passos*

It was winter the way winter used to be then with  
the trees and grass so that when it snowed it hung on  
the branches and the leaves and mother and father in  
the early evening would be peacefully silent and  
smiling and then sonny down from the stairs would  
say how it had snowed and I on her lap would go to  
the window to remember the branches covered white  
instead of frozen with dying.

And grma and grpa at Christmas dinner with the  
toys now opened and stored for a day or two in  
separate corners of the big room and the toys not half  
of what the opening the wrapped surprises below  
the tree were. And then father to work in a day or  
two and the holiday was over except that we played  
in the snow making the older sad and happy to see  
the snow mared and the children playing until school  
again and sonny and roger with studying and I sitting  
learning to paint, tie my shoes and later to write  
stories of organ grinders with starving monkeys.

And then spring and the night grma and grpa were  
in the other big room with father and mother and we  
were upstairs because something was happening  
which we could not hear. It must have been those bad  
words which they were saying which we were not to  
hear that we could not hear upstairs and I sneaking  
down the steps and listening at the big doors until  
they opened and no one noticed except mother who  
held me and I said loud so father and mother and  
grma and grpa could hear (sonny and roger upstairs  
could not hear, they were upstairs) why doesn't  
everyone kiss and be happy now. And then even after  
they looked at me mother put me down and said  
quietly go back upstairs and then no one at all  
noticed me again.

And summer on the leaves and the trees and not  
more stories and tying shoes but asleep on mothers  
lap hoping they could not hear because of the noise  
of the old car until many days later the door opened  
and they said this is grma Alan and I said how if grma  
was in Lincoln and father and mother just laughed  
and were peacefully silent holding hands while they  
talked to this grma while sonny and roger and me just  
played in the trees and leaves.

Photos by Russ Cole and Mike Theiler  
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