

# Thoughts While Plowing

Jean Ross

Sci. Jr.

When you've plowed each spring for forty years,  
And thirty in the same fields,  
Same dirt and fences,  
Same boulder in the middle of the north quarter section,  
When you plow like you walk,  
Easy-like, though it's work all the same,  
Then all you can do is plow, and think.

Should have let the calves out today—  
Sunny and nice. Will do that at noon.  
At noon—the mail unopened on the clockshelf,  
The Register, Hatchery circulars, the light bill,  
Perhaps the letter.

*Yesterday I lost my job.  
I'll write to say when I'll be back.  
Think I'll write a novel.*

Tell that to the neighbors!  
*Remember Ed Blake's son, Jack?  
The one that went east to college?  
Back home now. Writing a novel.  
Alone too. Divorced? I dunno.  
Call it separated if you want.*

The neighbors hadn't talked yet. They didn't know.  
He never came home much.  
When folks would ask, *How's your son?*  
He always said, *Just fine.*

The letters from the dean—low grades,  
And one from the frat president—drinking,  
He had put in the bib-pocket of his overalls  
So Agnes wouldn't know.

Then Jack had brought his wife home once.  
Hard. Hard to talk to.  
Used to eastern ways.  
Cigarettes and backless dresses.

Sure, every advantage they gave him, an only child.  
Now no job, no wife.  
He'd heard such talk before  
In the store where he'd stopped for bread.

In forty springs plowing you learn things,  
One day of wrong weather  
Can change the year's crop.  
Or if you wake to find bug-eaten stalks,  
Where corn had been,  
You don't talk about what might have happened.

Sons are like crops,  
Only it's harder when they fail.  
You can't blame son-failure on the weather.

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## The Alien

Dorothy Schlick

Ex. '44

Hang up the slacks, put the garden gloves away,  
Stow the broad-brimmed hat in the back entryway  
—Mary has moved to town to stay.  
She will wed the man she thinks she loves  
And if she prefers the gloves  
And the hat and the good rich soil  
To a life of ease without leisured toil,  
Why, she'll go right on with head unbowed  
And keep all the vows she solemnly vowed.

And if in spring her dreams stray away  
To fields, and in autumn she thinks of hay,  
Why, she'll laugh and go to a lecture on art  
And none will know save her farmer heart  
And later she and it will part.