

Del Schmidt

The Barnyard

-for Dad

I watched my father from the kitchen window,
Looking down at him
As he moved from the granary,
From within its huge hanging doors
Parted enough to allow entry to one slender man.

Buckets filled, handles wrapped in strong hands,
He carried them in long
Straight strides to the barn
Where he answered the hungry calls
Of horses and cattle.

Out farther, he walked among fat steers
That were restlessly gathered
Around wooden troughs.
He pushed through them,
A basket of corn on his shoulder,
Always coming away unscathed.

I grew to know the inside of his granary,
His oats and corn.
The buckets were heavy at first
But the time came
When I too could shoulder a full bushel.

Time came when I looked through the window,
Down on him,
Then turned away and hurried out
Through the front door,
The car he bought for me rumbling
Through nighttime chores into town.

A hard labor of love ran the barnyard.
He once told me,
As I rode the sturdy gate he was closing,
That if he could start life again
He would help his father more.