

Frost Farm Project

by Len Krisak (November 2017)



Harvest at La Crau, Vincent Van Gogh, 1888

Frost Farm Project

—volunteers at the Derry site

In this snap, he pauses from his mowing,
Posted to the white board in a pose
On a tractor seat from which he beams.
He's proud of how he's helped out, and it's showing.
The pasture grass has been laid low in rows,
But as to silence, idleness, or heat,
It's hard to think his blades dream golden dreams,
Or whisper of some labor he thinks sweet.
It's just a useful job got done—an act
That you could call a gift; a modest fact
Not even close to earnest love. That flowers

Were cut, or that he scared some bright green snake?
Both possible. And that he gave these hours?
The Farm's glad, though there is no hay to make.

From the Window of a Waiting Train

Under his nose, he holds one half-cupped hand
Frantically scratched at (though his eyes are calm).
Scant seconds pass before I understand:
The Lotto ticket scraped clean proves no balm.
Well, taken either way, an itchy palm.

Ford's *Yellow Ribbon*

His cavalry are singing as they ride,
With guidons winging in the blue like swallows,
Or scalps that flutter, pinned up to a lance.
Bold as the Mormon Tabernacle Choir,
They launch the movie full of trooper pride,
Though diegetic tunes at length expire,
As bloody misadventure quickly follows,
With every mission marred by some mischance.
Placeholders vie, in paladin romance,
For Joanne Dru. The buffalo come back—

A medicine sign that war chiefs should attack.

But Duke runs off the pony herd: there'll be

No war; a slew of people won't have died.

This classic airs a lot on AMC.

Len Krisak has published in *The London Magazine*, *The Oxonian Review*, *PN Review*, *Standpoint*, *Agni*, *The Antioch Review*, *The Sewanee Review*, *The Hudson Review*, *The Dark Horse*, *Agenda*, *The Hopkins Review*, *Commonweal*, *Literary Imagination*, *The Oxford Book of Poems on Classical Mythology*, and others. His books include [*Virgil's Eclogues*](#), University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010. Forthcoming: [*The Carmina of Catullus*](#), Carcanet Press, 2014, [*Afterimage*](#), Measure Press, 2014, [*Rilke: New Poems*](#), Boydell & Brewer, 2015 and [*Ovid: The Amores and The Ars Amatoria*](#), University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

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