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Manhood

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Manhood

As a boy, I spent afternoons detasselling my father's fields,
Roasting to a sweet perfection between
tall corn stalks and Mother's vegetable garden.
I remember going out into the corn and coming back
a man—full of bitterness and anger,
and unsurprised,
having swallowed them with my daily bread all these years.
Manhood—
now *that* was surprising.
I was not the strong, silent, pillar of flesh my father was.
I was confused
by the land. Torn
by doubt and indecision.
At night I shamed myself with tears
that came from nowhere
and collected in the fibers of my pillowcase.
In the morning I shaved—
removing yesterday from my face,
clearing a place of refuge for today.
When I went before the corn,
I screwed my face against the bitterness.

—K. Moore '01