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Cornpoem

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Cornpoem

They came to cut the corn this morning,
only the rain could stop them.
international harvester teeth
razor sharp
stalking
stopped
by the grey clouds and northwesterlies
spitting on the open-cabbed driver.

At noon the sun broke free.
the sturdy ford tractor
freshly painted barnyard-strutting firetruck red body
perched insect-like
between firestones girding corn yellow hubs
(‘Maize yellow,’ the t.v. indian corrects me)
trundled throatily
back to the aborted morning cut.

Jumpsuited khaki and pennzoil dark
Sutton’s boy
flapjacked and coffeed
jumped off the ford
fastening the umbilical cord
expectant
to funnel the tall thin rows
into the knives and rollers
to strip and squeeze the ears
from the fibrous waste of pale gold wrappings
frosted brittle-
the hard ears thump dully
into the hound-faithful trailer.

Working outside in,
Sutton pauses
only to hitch another trailer to his train-
the golden square thins before his blades
leaving trampled husks,
muddy silk.
Save overlooked cobs
and stubs of stalks once tractor high,
the corn is gone
when Gilligan’s Island comes on at four.

Mike Augusta