

## **Homeland**

In dreams I still go  
where hammocks sleep,  
and wait for us  
to come to them  
with weary limbs  
and eyelids creased  
with pleasant sweat,  
from work in fields  
that we own,  
and hold in our hands.

We shield our eyes  
from sun that sends a coin rolling  
across cloudless wooden floorboards  
over our heads,  
as hours crease the pages  
of poems in books  
read only in summer.  
The wind travels the yard,  
lures us back to work.  
Seeds feel new purpose  
deep within their simple souls.  
We tell them to find dark layers of earth  
and wait with their eyes closed.

We plant pumpkin and watermelon  
in little hills of earth,  
with young hands and ancient tools.  
They grow and grow  
the stars of silent songs;  
we leave them alone  
listening to the moon's chorus  
of cricket castanets.

In long breathless afternoons  
when snakes get too close,  
Grandpa stomps his feet  
like the mallet of a drum.  
Green bodies slip away in dust,  
lost in Indian summer grass,  
brown and sympathetic.

All day  
Bobwhite  
Bobwhite  
Bobwhite  
We never know the real name  
for Bobwhite birds,  
calling to us  
the only English word they know,  
a two-pitch question.  
Clouds of bees screech revenge  
when we cut the grass.  
Furious! Because we stole white clovers.

Grandpa can't walk for miles anymore,  
or scare away the garden beasts,  
or teach the melons to grow.  
Green will always survive  
and paint the ground  
to stay alive without him,  
like he taught it to.

Soon  
someone else will see our stars  
and hear our moon  
and walk through the acres  
without shoes.