

*It Is Insane
I Beat
My Plowshare*

ALAN DAVIES

It is insane I beat my plowshare
at a stone until it turns to sword
in the stiff grip of my armed fist.
I have planted at the furrowed turf
for all the years there are from twelve
to middle age, and just beyond,
and know with certain certainty
the pull of plow against the fallow ground.
I know, as others do who till from time
to time, from that year to this other
summer, gold in its iniquitous harvest,
I know the ox out in front
and the plow behind from end to end
and back again up the long hot field,
and back, and again, till the plow stops
and the summer begins its stint
as fertilizer and as god of growth.
I've seen the thistle, as it were,
of wheat grown solid into air,
have felt rain moistening the earth
from brown to black, and have fled
the house, angry, to see cracked soil
drink at the well in the sky.
I know the crop grown full for harvest.
I know the curl of fingers at a scythe,
and its low sweep through the field
and its work of righteous devastation
as it flattens the wheat to obeisance
at the feet of the creator-sun.
And the harvest in the bins, I know also.
This chapter in the lives of men, this farm journal,
I know as I know not the bitter taste of war.
I take the word of others gone before
that slaughter and slow harvest are not one.