**The Reaper Sleeps, Uneasy**

Gaven Wallace

Sanguine wheat settles as the sun breaks against the horizon. Sighing, tilled dirt tastes damp night, baked cuts of peat rest, exhaling solar heat. Grain whispers sweet nothings across the valley in golden tinge.

A thatched roof covers

restless eyes

and a dust-filled lung.

The valley breathes with verdant breath. Life ripples through the roots of an embedded crop. Scattered mice pick at the layers of fallen wheat that lattice sown dirt, bringing the scraps to their burrows and feeding their young from the browning shoots. There is a dense blanket of *coos* as field owls leave their nests for the nights hunt amongst the grain. Flapping wings press the heady air of the field down into thirsty pores of dirt.

A scythe lays fallen

and cracked next

to the farmhouse door.

The foundation sags sordidly into the dense mud. Weeds shoot heavenward through clods of dirt and grind against the cobble base of the farmhouse, covering the exterior with lively brambles of amaranth and nutsedge. Curling fingers climb the windowsill, wrapping around the jamb, growing ever taller, ever more encumbering. The cracks in the cobble taste of native moss.

The Reaper, in sleep

dreams of rest

under roof of straw.