**The Field at Dusk**

Matthew McFarlane

The crunch of gravel beneath my shoes gives way to grass,

Then dirt, rippling away from me in endless rows,

One after the other, my feet pass over this not-quite barren ground,

The shredded stalks of corn still rooted gamely in the earth,

I am heading toward the setting sun and the silhouette of

The lonely tree, rising from the field like the hand of a drowning man,

The place where generations of farmers have taken

Their noontime seats with lunch and thermos.

Upon it sits the hawk I have been watching all afternoon,

Floating on the thermals, hovering in grace and stillness.

I pass over the earth, bathed in sunset it begins to rust,

And the shadow of the tree reaches out to me, ever longer.

Soon we will meet, and I will walk in darkness across the rows,

Studying the hooked profile of the raptor on its branch.

I am ready to rest my back against the trunk and watch as the

World beyond the house disappears into a charcoal smear,

The lights from the windows singing out against the night,

While phantoms come and go behind the panes.