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## Heritage

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## HERITAGE

In the old burying-ground near Milford Town  
 I saw the graves of many of my ancestors,  
 Their friends and neighbors, old Connecticut settlers  
 And their descendants. Bassett, Putnam, Allen,  
 Winslow, Cleve, and Woods were the names, each worn old slab  
 Cobwebbed, rainpitted, caked with centuries, each a window  
 Through which I looked back to those old hardy ones  
 From whom I had descended. (We in Western New York  
 Came down from the adventurous Jacob, who had wived a Winslow,  
 Had gone up into Vermont, then over the New York border,  
 And so up the Mohawk Valley to the wild Niagara frontier.)  
 Here in a far corner under a lilac gray with August dust  
 Was the grave of my father's grandmother, Asenith,  
 Her mother beside her.

Returning to Milford Town in late afternoon,  
 Cousin Edna, my brother, my father, and I, our auto passed,  
 Like time leaving an older age behind, an ox-cart  
 Driven by a sunbonneted countrywoman whom time  
 Had forgotten to touch; along the dusty road  
 The slow-footed beast with ancient nodding head  
 Kept on. I turned in the speeding car and gazed back  
 Until the quaint, forgotten figures fused in dust and distance.

In town once more we did not see such names  
 As Bassett, Putnam, Allen, Winslow, Cleve, and Woods  
 On signs and windows of shops and offices;  
 New Connecticut settlers had taken their places,  
 Later pilgrims from many other lands.  
 We stopped and bought meat for supper at Colosimo's  
 Butcher shop, and groceries from Mr. Max Ginsberg,  
 For whom Cousin Walter worked.

Burying-ground  
 And ox-cart, death and slow time behind,  
 Milford Town, heritor of new living streams,  
 Frontiers afresh into ways of human strength.

C. V. WICKER