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The Fields

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The Fields

By Dominic J. Pfister

I.

All the fields outside of the town,
Gilded, and cluttered with corn,
Move throughout the year in myriad ways:
When the winds shift the stalks,
Or the ground animals bump the corn-stems
As they run from the humming blades,
Of a thresher, when it rolls steadily past.

II.

Winds tousle the wheat
And bend the stalks of corn so that
The ears lean low toward the ground.
Sometimes rains come,
And wet the leaves, and the petals
Of those ground-flowers that are
Weeds, or are like weeds, which live,
Beneath the overlapping shadows of the corn.

III.

Below, among the strong bottom parts of the stalks
Animals of the fields, small creatures,
With dark noses and intelligent eyes,
Woodchucks and grey mice,
Skitter, not underground, but unseen,
Making small sounds, footsteps,
Quiet calls of hunger, distress,
Sometimes overwhelmed by the roar of a tractor engine.

IV.

When it is night in the field, true night,
Not lit by stars or a hunter's moon,
But so foreign from the richly illuminated day,
That it is like a distant country,
The blanketing sounds of the dusk
Usurps every other noise, so that all human
Sounds are swallowed up and their
Rumblings unheard over the natural din.

V.

Underneath the earth, there at one time
Lay the unencumbered dead

And perhaps the roots of the corn,
If they stretched deeply enough,
And if corn was grown here
Over half a century ago,
Weaved around or through the bodies,
On their spreading paths.

VI.

In the winter, the rattle of dry husks of corn
Can be heard if there is no snow,
And if there is snow, the empty skins are covered,
All is dampened and the world seems quiet enough
That the field may be taken for eternally silent,
Life and movement half-remembered thoughts,
Dream-memories, quickly shaken off
In the first moments after waking.