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**Amish Gothic**  
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## **Nathaniel Smith**

### AMISH GOTHIC

Clean brown fields. Corn and potatoes, starting to sprout. Old brick houses, the center of Strasburg. A wagon creaks down the town's main street, two passengers sitting straight as corn on the seat. The canvas roof frames their heads and shoulders as a Renaissance stone window curves over mother and child. But these are no Florentines, and no olive groves rise from azure rivers behind them. The grandmother, white bonnet over gray hair and stern face, grips the reins. A small boy, bowl-cut blond hair under broad-brimmed straw hat, holds on beside her. The wagon is black, the trotting horse is black, their clothes from neck to toe are black. The spoked wheels trick the eye into thinking they turn backwards, back toward the old country landscape from which, centuries ago, a lost tribe wandered off while the rest of the village was skating under a Brueghel sky.