

King and Kernel

Old palomino work horses

Dad bought from our neighbor

about twenty years ago

for a wagon-load of corn

were members of our farm family.

Brother and sister - Mom thought-

who pulled the plow, corn planter,

hay wagon and carried me, bareback,

my legs gripping her ribs,

wherever I wanted to go.

After a workday in the field,

their leather harnesses removed,

they roll on their backs in the pasture,

then return for their brushing

and a bucket of oats.

Until

Dad comes back from the barn for breakfast

with sorrow soaking his overalls:

“It’s Kernel.”

By Arlin Buyert