

Sold

Forty years of growing corn and oats
ends when Dad picks the last ear
in late October 1963.
From college in St. Paul,
I drive home for the farm sale.

High on the elevated Great Northern tracks
framing the east side of our farm,
I see pick-ups and tractors
parked askew in the cornfield
just behind our sagging barn.
The cows are gone, our old farmhouse echoes,
weeds block the outhouse door,
and a north wind buttons my jacket.

The auctioneer calls out and overall-farmers
nod or raise their hands
to bid on Mr. Z, our Minneapolis Moline tractor,
with its lost paint and naked tires.
Oh the days and years we spent together,
plowing, planting, picking
and pulling the toboggan.
Then the slam of the gavel.
Sold! 400 dollars.

I walk back to my car.

By Arlin Buyert