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## **THE RANCH**

You sleep on stacked mattresses and mice run

the floor, biting at toes; you wake, set traps

and stack the mattresses higher still.

This is old Sask summer: flax and mustard

paint the horizon the bright yellow colour of sun

you find in children's pictures, and always

the sky is just another dead prairie above you.

Everything you remember lives inside

the chicken-farm homestead

with its back-broken frame and that reek

of old water sitting still. At night the house breathes

with open windows, swells at the seams.

At sunrise, it exhales a dust so fine

you think of bull hearts, dried and ground.

When it's gutted of furniture, you find imprints

in the carpet: four beds, two dressers, a shelf.

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and from those years when no one kept it,  
from The Lease before the oil and the oilmen came, the mark  
where the deer walked in, lay down and died.

## FENCELESS

There are no signposts, no old men waiting  
to tell you *here*. This place repeats itself;  
everywhere you've been is folded into grass  
and dirt, and you blame chance, not science,  
for putting the iron here, like no seismic charts  
were read, no holes drilled, as if wealthy men  
and god The Lease just wanted you sweating The Lease in the mud.  
But the cows, they can find borders even under  
daylight's sterile sun, watch nations grow  
from boot prints, divide the plain by men  
and else. They graze away, uncountable,  
unheard as you walk the field, tool to tool,  
with no sense of what is yours, and what is not.

## THE TANK

Squats three days at a time in white-brown mud  
that sticks and sucks, like a mouth, against

## The Lease

With no, for \$60,000p.a will work of financial staff as the work, a articles The Lease it reinforce  
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