

To a Pioneer's Grandson

My son, when you were born today,
One tiny heartache found its way
Into my joy -- that pioneer
Who gave me life could not be here.

Nor could one turning of life's page
Bring back to me the heritage
Of land he left for us to hold
In trust and faith. When it was sold,

A part of me was dead, bereft

Of hope. They signed away
The acres and they say,
"These must be sold for ready cash."
I wilt beneath the constant verbal lash
Of those who THINK they know!
"Far better that some stranger sow
The fields. No woman's hand
Can reap a harvest on this land.

Why keep it? ", they exclaim,
"For silly sentiment or name.
You have no means to cultivate the soil.
A quarter section would despoil
By lying idle til this son
Would grow to see the seeding done."

*But I know the pioneer who carved this field
Out of the virgin soil would rather yield
To sentiment, if he could speak beyond the grave,
"This is the land I would my grandsons save
From creditors and those who laugh
At my unspoken cenotaph.*

*This is the land my sweat and pain
For forty decades saw one aim:
To generations yet to be,
Bequeath to my posterity
These acres, though each setting sun
Should see the harvesting undone.*

*This was my blood, my life, my all!
Far better that this land should fall
To those who are a part of me --
Though early gain is yet to be.*

*Why else should I have labored here
When drought and hail and atmosphere
Defied existence? Why should I
Have struggled here if but to die --
And let some stranger reap untold
The years of harvest that unfold?"*

*My son, in future dreams I see
My quarter section endlessly
In thistles, weeds and fruitless grass
Lying in wait for years to pass
Til you are grown. But all is lost.
The callous did not count the cost.*

*In cold, unsentimental greed,
They sold the land and gave the deed
To strangers. I can only weep
And hold in memory the sweep
Of childhood pastures, fields and home,
Still lost to me, when you are grown.*



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