

For Bonnie

Randal W. Allred

Ever since the homestead days, when you,
The eldest, baked the bread for barefoot boys
Flushed from the corn for lunch, the care we knew
Was testimony of your oaken poise.
And when you left the weathered wood of home
With wide brown eyes, the heavy sandstone walls
Of college seemed like mountains — the sky a dome
So large, a farm girl could not search it all.
But then, with him, you strove with gentle pain
(Your young but work-worn hands would scrub our heads,
And tuck us, kissed and storied, in our beds.)
To bring to pass the circle of life again.
 And I see my child strive to learn the song
 That you, with care and labor, sang so long.

RANDAL ALLRED is currently living with his wife and three children in Los Angeles, where he is a doctoral student in American literature at UCLA.