

# Planting Day

*Quinn Warnick*

Behind the weathered barn, I crouch  
among burlap bags full of this year's  
seed. These kernels promise before  
they prove, and I have no choice  
but to trust them, turn under  
the hard crust, smooth the deep cracks,  
clear weeds and rocks and dead birds,  
and finally count measured handfuls,  
each of the infinite granules  
packed tight with failure or success—  
they will not say which.

I think all morning of our autumn life  
and the four-month gamble that begins  
today. The sun scorches my neck,  
sweat runs salty into the corners  
of my mouth, and at home  
my whole family practices a day  
of penance. I am alone in this  
field of clay, trembling on a wooden bench,  
my fissured hands clenching the reins  
that nudge along two horses.