



O Sunflower

a poem by Brian C. Simerl

From the black dirt come waves of amber grain, shrouded in early morning shadows; a still- porch, in the distance, wanes.

From this hearty, flat, black earth emerges the ominous yellow field; a dreadful fate for those that nibble on her yield.

Out she comes from stalk to her ears, dressed in tassels and German hosiery, an innocent Cowgirl in a little flower dress, but for two large blank abnormalities.

Once again, it's harvest time and all she sees are grains to reap, the girl with sunflowers for eyes, when she sets her gaze upon you, America's heartland creeps.

She slaughters the hog, and she slaughter's the turkey, and when the land is hot and dry she channels canals, which leaves her murky. Looking at the windmill, and the barn that rests beside it, she turns herself around and finds that nobody's inside it.

She sits out there alone each day, along the million miles of hay, living what she would call life 'in that slow American way.' Looking for a man to seed and season her, of this bond a marriage she doth pray, to finally make another her or him inside of her, to cultivate and to cure; free of pesticides and teach to sew and devil all their hides.

To smoke the turkey and the hog, and feed the family, cut the log, and work right from the break of day. Where the sunflower-eyed girl doth lay, in moments when she'd pray, she'd imagine stealing her father's tractor and then head for the expressway. Where she'd go is a mystery ya know. I mean, who could she tell? No one's there but a scarecrow. You know the one I mean, the one with the thorny halo.

O Sunflower, with your dark brown eyes and bright yellow eye lids, with pigtails coiled to perfection as the wind tosses them asunder, has anyone ever been so unwanted?

Off to the rodeo, she'll take you to the show, where the clowns all know her by name. The brave cowboys 'rassle steers and when they fail know who to blame. As their horses lunge right back as they look upon her sunflower eyes. "You are the prettiest little mutant thing, cross my heart and hope to die."

Now it's church on Sunday and she wears her Sunday best. She does her best to hide them. But those eyes of hers have seen such sin, it's impossible to disguise them. Not one can forgive her at sunset or at sunrise. Even when she tells the truth, all they hear are lies.

Back on the corn field, her strong, slender farm arm plants the American flag, at 4:34am in May, when not even horses care to drag.

Up we tilt to see you and admire your American face, from the amber waves of grain up to where your eyes have been misplaced. Instead, all that remains are the sunflowers you have for eyes. Dressed like a cowgirl, in your little flower dress, covered in cow pies.

We love you O
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In your tassels and German
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Despite your two large blank abnormalities.