

In my favorite field

*This field lies just beyond Auburn City
Limits where 15th Northwest intersects
with the West Valley Highway*

All summer in this field only cattle
& grass & the heron & buttercups scatter
like buttons tossed on a double bed,

content to be what they are: the cows
so many dark planets drifting outward
at morning, west & inward at dusk.

But in November the sky turns lead
& the creek runneth over, far over,
covering the grass, & at twilight

the farmer goes about in his boat
among the flat gray of the barns,
the gray silk rain & the cattle standing

chest deep in gray water, shivering
with cold. He rows steady among them,
herding them, reaching far over

to lay his hand on them, soothe
them onto higher ground. Even
when they have gone, sometimes,

the farmer rows out alone, the yard dog
sitting up at attention before him,
& looks down through the flood

to the green hair of summer, waiting,
moving slow—& the buttercups,
so many quick yellow stars.

In this final hour there is no sound
but boatwash, the hull creaking,
oars in the oarlocks, the dog

in the stern, his short sharp bark,
a lantern shining over water
in the early dark.

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