

Walking on Rooftops

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by Caroline Lawless

Walking on rooftops
over-looking freshly tilled fields
that my grandfather worked
until the sun bled black and blue
and stars came out to wash
the sins of the world away,
we sat and watched the world
move underneath our feet.
We sat there despite the heat,
my brother and I,
throwing stones and small sticks
at the stock-still fences
that never would budge,
despite our pleadings.
We sat and watched the cows
mill around, swatting their tails
in a rhythm all their own,
wanting the flies to leave,
yet inviting them, somehow, to stay.
We watched them in our Sunday best,
Sneaking up the rusted gate
when mother wasn't looking,
half spilling our cups of homemade
lemonade.
Now grandfather is gone, mixing in
with the dust;
we don't visit the graves much any-
more.
We can't go back to those rooftop
days,
because someone else has taken them
away.
A house full of strangers
lives on that un-lined road now,
spending time on the porch
graypeelingblue
that we called
"home away from home"
on those lazy summer days.
I wonder if we'll ever go back,
my brother and I,

in another time
when those strangers have
packed their bags and
moved to the city
and left that old place
for shiny new dreams
that the dust
seems to hinder.
We will go back,
in another time
and another place.
We will go back
and climb to our perch
on top of the world,
and pretend we're kids again,
and not talk about the weather