Paean

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Paean

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Abstract

To the sum of these There is no more delight: Sunlight in cold air- Sunlight and the breathless rush Of wings in a thousand hearts;...
as he smiled at her bent over the fire. Softly he said, "One of these days, Minnie, you'll be the finest lady in all this country and I'll have—not acres of land—but sections." His eyes shone with a fanatic light, and he drew Owen to his side and pointed out the door. "Son, see that land?" The small boy's black head bobbed up and down, his eyes never leaving his father's face. "Land's what ya want, son. As long as ya got land yer okay."

Minnie walked across the room and faced her husband. Drawing Owen out of his father's arms, she placed both hands on his shoulders and stared down at him. He squirmed uncomfortably beneath her look.

"Mother, ya look so scarey."

She gripped his shoulders tighter. Her breath came in small gasps. "Owen, don't ever like this land. Don't listen to yer paw. It's bad, it'll hold ya here the rest of yer life, and ya'll never be free of it."

"But, Mother, I like this land."

Her hands dropped from his shoulders and hung limply at her side.

"Mother, don't look that way. Don't ya like our land?"

She looked down at her son, her eyes smouldering. Drawing a deep breath, she turned—looked out the door once more. "I hate this land!"

The eyes of her men followed her as she moved over to the fire and began dishing up the peas and tossing the browned, greasy mush onto a long, white dish.

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To the sum of these
There is no more delight:
Sunlight in cold air—
Sunlight and the breathless rush
Of wings in a thousand hearts;
Clear, upsinging sky
And the soft shuffle of hurrying feet.

Warm hands, clasped,
Weave infinitely impossible memories
Of winged days, sky-swept nights.