The Haymen

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the haymen
(for my father and brian)

the purple blooms and the browns
of august speak
to them in a language lacking
words punctuation
dusty machines swallow semen
of grease guns
lost leather gloves are found
by wives mothers and small
boys anxious to prove themselves

useful barns are cleared flat
tires take CPR only to suffer
a slow death for the second
time in a summer
summits are held by
the tyrants of the field
and the kitchen each making
battle plans each certain
that to attack at dawn is very

wise men armed with tradition
and pride will conquer alfalfa clover
orchard grass and give gasoline
transfusions to exhausted
mechanical comrades oblivious

to the revolution cattle
graze smugly on swing their tails
like crouched cats
at flies the size of tiny mice
and talk amongst themselves about barbed
wire sheep dogs or freedom at dusk
the haymen retreat to feather filled
beds and recount
their exploits to mates too tired
for sex then surrender
to dreams of purple blooms and august brown
as a tepid breeze passes
through a screen-door over their bodies
and onto fall

— Chris Thompson