

BARRY BUTSON

To the Farm

Once, an older, wiser brother said
I should be a farmer.

I never comprehended.

I would ask him now, but he's dead.
Why should I (unhandy and bookish)
farm? Why indeed.

Still, there are—not so deep inside—
ancestral peasants from Europe
and onwards who cleared forests, broke soil,
bullied animals and wives and children,
upon whom I could draw.

He was right, that brother.
I need a farm to fill me up.
I'm hollow as a bad tooth.
Pacing days and evenings without direction.
Without job, home or purpose.

A farm would provide all three.

I'd be lousy, covered in beard and muck.
Cursing animals and all who got in my way.
But at least—before I'm dead—
for once I'd be alive.

Just this week, while golfing, I heard
from down the road a titanic crash
and the repeated yell: “Jesus
Christ Almighty!” A guy cutting
down a huge fir on the front lawn of his farm
had it fall right across the road
where it sliced hydro and phones
and blocked traffic for two days.
That would be me as farmer—miscalculating
this, underestimating that. Truly,
truly alive—and every now and again
shouting “Jesus Christ Almighty!”