

Farms at Auction

Acres of all we own go back to sand
and blow away. Grandfathers whose crops
are bindweed whisper from the fields,
Don't go. Look close, there's no one home.
Shook hard, their limbs drop pears, the gnarled,

hard nuggets wormy. We wonder, are we here by choice?
I call this patch of dirt a farm, section of a ranch
that failed. A drought like this in 1880
bankrupted that ranch of investors.
They dug more windmills and prayed

but couldn't import grain like Jacob
from the stores of Egypt. This pasture's nothing
to brag about, more the bank's than mine.
It might have been a corral for mustangs,
if rain had saved them. Tumbleweeds

bounce down the road, collide with barbed wires
and build dunes. Buyers drive slowly by
and stare. Thumb through the phone book:
you'll find no bureau for despair.
We pray to parched mirages for real clouds.

But rain might be the devil's fee.
Hold up your country head and plow.
Cactus and mesquite trees grow their blooms
and beans no matter how many times
I bulldoze and burn them.

Walter McDonald