

This Is

by John Riley

I once lived in a world where the toads came out on spring nights. If I journeyed behind the old barn and wandered the empty pasture in that time between sundown and full dark the toads bounced in the weeds and the crickets existed in their sound. The excitement of an deserted pasture full of shadows and sounds is more than can be said. Have you ever spent twilight in a old pasture? Or in a field after the crops are all harvested, the potatoes dug and the beans picked, the peas ready for the shucking? If you have you know how the twilight sky fills your inside like lava. You're not wet but you are a swimmer in the thick yellow light. Yes, once there were oceans here, you think, and you float through the fence and past the barn where the mules and ponies no longer need to be fed. What you think is "I love you light when you are leaving," and that this is your first and last moment on earth.

