

Rebekah Just When the Drought Was Ending

by Justin Hamm

But the best thing about Rebekah
was the way she floated always
beneath the scent of woodburn
and dusty Middle America,
her keen ranch-queen convictions
slicing deep and deeper into
the tiniest of daily miseries
with skepticism, demanding always
some proof before she'd concede
this life He pieced together for us
cell by cell with ever shakier Godfingers
contained even one malignancy.

Every bow-legged young bull rider,
every sunburnt farmer of someday
who stopped by to mend a fence
or just to offer genteel salutations
would see her backlit by sunset,
dream her into his own mother
and pray to the essence of the prairie
to do what old bones could not.
And it worked. She survived well enough
to give of herself four more seasons
among luckless kinfolk who every one
drank greedily the blood she squeezed
and felt the cracked lips of dry times less.

As long as there was some great need
into which she could empty herself

she could will the heart to continue
and none of the rules of dying applied,
but she must've seen that the new rain
wasn't baptismal or meant for her restoration.
When those stormclouds finally swelled
and burst into fat miracle drumbeats
she must've felt the change was coming on.
Why else open the windows so wide
with no thought for the evening chill?
Why else cut a hundred wildflowers
and arrange them into fiery clusters
but pour no water into their vases?

