

Harvesting Brains Pastoral

by Shawn Misener

The sky is red and violent and the skinny farmer digs up brains with his shovel.

Pitching them from the earth they shriek in Morse code. A bawdy secretary languishes behind the farmer, translating the squealing gray matter and scratching her rectangular nose obsessively.

As each rusted wheelbarrow fills with minds a donkey appears and slouches away with the load. "Fourteen thousand eight hundred and twenty seven" counts the secretary in whispers born under the prairie wind.

Somewhere behind the far distant trees a monstrous fog horn bellows. Both the farmer and the secretary vanish in identical puffs of heavy dust, leaving behind brains strewn around like so much neglected cauliflower.

A vacuous, slow moment.

Then a new farmer appears, the atmosphere popping violently in his arrival, followed by another short-skirted secretary, her glasses askew and eyes cocked in confusion.

The second shift begins when the farmer scoops his first brain. The sky reluctantly shades from maroon to a painful deep purple, the clouds wrench themselves into loose threatening coils, and the secretary bends an elven ear towards the multitudes of pleading encephalitic vegetables.

