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Combines in the Dark

Robert Vivian

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Combines in the Dark

Abstract

Combines at night, deep telepathy of bread and windmill, what will you do with all the drifting veils that rise above you in verse of smoke and vast exudation, your headlights staring into the night until nothing is not seen even nothing itself?

Cover Page Footnote

"Combines in the Dark" was originally published at *Booth*.



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Combines in the Dark

Nonfiction by Robert Vivian

Combines at night, deep telepathy of bread and windmill, what will you do with all the drifting veils that rise above you in verse of smoke and vast exudation, your headlights staring into the night until nothing is not seen even nothing itself? Hear now our only prayers as you move, devouring the countless rows. Who is driving you, and what is his name, her name sitting atop the mantra of acres? And what is food to you? What is sustenance and table and horn of plenty and furtive food stamp slipped under a turnip and wheat sure to rise in ovens across the country as you eat the earth at the threshold of gnash in a great clockwise of tearing? And what is farm to you and ache, and what are dawns of ever after with tires big as holding chambers where people wait to hear whether they will live or die, and you are judgment, you are reckoning? And what you tumble and shear is stored away in silos and grain elevators under rusting corrugated roofs, a coolie's hat, and in your dreams of sifting and miles, miles, more land, more runoff, I wonder how hungry you are or whether your hunger is just a mindless machine that would master the earth but never love it. And how I hear you this night in October as the days get shorter and the leaves turn to falling notes of bright, bright music, and you a moving swath of blade and beam harvesting in the dark with the calm ferocity of marauding bees.

Robert Vivian has published plays, poetry, novels, stories, and essays. He's currently working on a collection of dervish essays.