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## Coffee Time

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# Coffee Time

by Lorna Van Gilst

Halfway to summer noon my sister and I  
padded narrow footprints  
into dust kneaded soft by tire treads, windsifted,  
down the lane

Toward two mantractors moving  
monotonously  
end to end  
over the green rows.

Restless with waiting, we with our sticks  
waylaid ants  
drew dust mazes  
teased turd-rolling beetles  
Till Father's Farmall wiped out our games.

Perched on black furrow seats  
in scant patches of tractor shade,  
Dad unhitching one striped overall strap  
to let air through the bib,  
sweat deepening the blue of chambray shirt,  
he and his man Virgil  
poured the pre-creamed steaming brew into thermos bottle caps,  
reached deep into the Sunbeam bread sack  
for slices buttered well to the edge  
layered with thick slabs of dried beef  
or tongue  
or heart.

And I smelled the soil, steamy with corn smell,  
And I smelled the sweat on Dad's striped cap  
—starched stiff on Monday over a gallon can—  
And I smelled the coffee, rich with cream,

And it was the summer smell of promise.