Reaping

Mike Vanden Bosch

Dordt College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege

Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol38/iss2/6
Uncle A. is the first farmer in our area to own a mounted two-row corn picker. The machine rustles through the fields, a double-throated rhinoceros devouring corn stalks like golden licorice in choking dust; it wrestles ears of corn from stalks into husking rollers between which sits uncle, unmasked. Wagons pursue the picker-like mammoth toys. My dad L.T. says No to the machine—\textit{the air’s fresh; work courts sleep}. But the picker—\textit{“God’s gift”}—can creep faster than any colt can walk, pick more corn in a day than any man can in a month. Some farmers envy uncle. Others come by night, ask his fee for picking their corn. Uncle figures out a fair profit and soon, rarely sleeping, picks corn for months on a dozen, then two dozen farms by day and by tractor lights into snow. By the end of the first fall, uncle coughs till midnight. By \textit{“Stille Nacht,”} syrup slows his cough and come spring plowing, he says, \textit{L.T., I think my cough is cured}. When dad asks if he will take more jobs come fall, uncle says, \textit{I think so}, adding he may buy a second picker since his oldest son’s now old enough to man it, and \textit{It’s good money to boot}. Soon dad forgoes fresh air, buys a picker, and Uncle A. sleeps where good money’s moot.