

## The Old Country Store

Weathered stuff, antique things  
Swooning cast-iron tubs, with orange stains and cracked claw feet  
Saw blades, with memories of ancient oak trees long deceased  
Scrub boards, with fuzzy imaginations of Mothers' cracked fingernails  
    etched in weathered form on their wrinkled metal  
Rusty shovels and rakes, with missing teeth  
    made lovely by sweat embedded in broken handles  
Three marbles in a streaked green jar  
    once held by a bright-eyed lad 'midst the Great Depression  
A window sash, with cracked glass  
    missing glass, and a muddy frame  
    recovers memories for only eighty-five cents  
Confederate history hobbles around the yard  
    between clumps of dirt and dry monkey grass  
    as wrinkled gray barn wood  
    cries out of costly joys and hard labor by calloused hands  
Collars for oxen and horses recall attempts to survive and win  
Gun parts and musket balls and a tired old flag recall conflicts  
    anguish, victories, defeats; and changes of peoples and times  
Ancestors breathe through the clapboard siding  
    nostalgia dribbling out the front door  
    while the ancient are welcomed back  
    by casual minds, curious and naïve  
The mystique and beauty of these shriveled goods  
    wet my patriotic, country eyes  
    as apparently worthless things seek a nest in modern homes  
Origin, tradition and blood itself...  
    all on sale...for nearly nothing  
The new store owner somehow seems older than his merchandise  
    his countenance and attitude creakier  
    and more weathered  
    than the one-horse plow he won't sell  
But, we come anyway  
    and we buy stuff anyway  
Roots and imagination and nostalgia...  
    like an old book...  
    make everything precious

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