GLENN ARTHUR SWEAZEY

Out There in the Buckwheat … Game of Dreams

'Cause grandpa was right after all,
what's real and true lies out there –
in the buckwheat, hidden beneath
winter snow, cold and fresh fallen,
or in dust and dry sand of summer heat.

It was the best place to go
for a walk about the farm,
'longside the fields –
one brushing the poplar copse
where sparrows and starlings
chatter 'n' sing, so loud 'n' real sweet.

Who are we if not harvest from seeds in fields whence we came?

It's not just the places, of course, though one's "home place" often plays a large part in the person we become. But it's the people – special ones, each of us have had them – who harrowed the fields of that home place so we could grow tall and straight as we'd ever hope to be.

Sitting up there along the third base line,
cigarette hanging from his lower lip,
I knew then, that in his laconic way,
the game holds few surprises, even when
Keith unusually strikes out, or when
Clare fails to run down a centre field drive.

The grass in the home team's park always smells
freshly mown, sweet like hay on his farm, not
five miles away, down old Coal Road, next to
Arthurs' Corner where cows grazed through my youth.
On homestead, Stan Arthur knew those farm fields,
having worked them all for years, long gone by.

As thoughts drift back to fields my grandfather worked many years ago, his rural sayings and mannerisms come quickly to mind. It's about "what [was] real and true" I remember so well about him. No pretense – he didn't care much 'bout what most others thought, unless they were kin. But you could trust he meant what he said and, when silent, it was because he hadn't the mind to waste his words.

The baseball diamond in Otterville Park
can only be reached across long foot bridge
over Otter Creek — a world to itself,
where sweat from toil by day is put to ease
by playing for hit, run, catch, then throw out
at home, third, second, first – ties to runner.

As darkness descends, all lights have shone on
and chorus of crickets drown crack of bat,
the one thing clear, missed by a youngster's eyes:
outs in each inning and runs coming home
may fit neatly a box score, win each game,
ne'er bridge their meaning back to a farm.

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In the fields of his farm, Stan Arthur knew what needed to be done. It was plow, seed, water and harvest those fields. Feeding livestock and family through periods both thick and thin – when his rural values took root. They helped sow similar values that stay with me still. They're part of the harvest from fields of my grandfather's farm.

From his expert perch up the third base line,
Stan sees the double as soon as it's hit –
under breath, I hear him say, "… good for two,"
then sure as moths and midges hog the lights,
Clare goes into second bag, standing up –
seeing his sure quick smile, I know he's right.

It's top of last frame, with game on the line;
Keith's crowding in from third, just heels on dirt –
and then, as quick as the fifties and game
came to mind, I'm alone – innings all done;
his farm fields passed on to Don, youngest son,
but, my, what a game on that diamond field.

GLENN ARTHUR SWEAZEY's writing blends prose and poetry to create narrative harmonies. Recognizing the importance of style and structure, his writing sometimes uses comparative "relics of poetic structure," such as iambic pentameter, to evoke unique characteristics defining an ever-receding past. One past work includes a verse novel manuscript, *The Lost Papers of Tom Thomson*. He lives in Ottawa.