Yielding to the Harvest

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YIELDING TO THE HARVEST

Soybeans yielding to autumn's advance. 
Yellow-blotched fields of rust,
  stubby redwood, and pasteled brown. 
Yellow and green mottled fields fading,
  yet clinging to summer
  slowly yielding 
Chlorophyll saying reluctant
goodbyes.

Rows 
dipping
  through grassed waterways and sloughs 
Their seeded grasses stem tall above
  the beaned, leafless stalks
Rows cresting and falling,
curving then ending at fencerows and boundaries
Stylized rows, 
  their uniformity interrupted by protruding foreign growth
  (alien species still green
  thriving in the unintended hospitality of the rows
  and persisting through cultivations).
Flat rows, rolling rows,
  straight rows, contoured rows.
Row beside row,
  eternal.
What joy the harvest!
Billions of pod-wombed beans
  nearing birth
Great harvesters - red ones, green ones,
  orange ones - arrive in the fields,
Reeling through the rows
Hungrily sickling,
Gobbling scores of podded stalks
  each second.

Pods shatter, clatter,
  threshed from the stems,
  threshed from their life source during summer's growth.
Now birthed from their pods,
  the yellow-brown beans continuously cascade
  into the harvester's hopper,
  tiny black eyes in their first sunlight
  squinting.

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The great harvesters spew pods and stems behind.

Dust foggily follows their gentle
lumbering along the rows.

A humming dis-assembly plant on wheels,
thrashing, hulling, quaking,
rhythmically shaking.

The Indian Summer sun prickles
the workers’ summer-tanned skin.

Wind breezes cornfields nearby
even as the Great Spirit winds the harvest also,
blowing dust and chaff
from the fruit in uneven gusts.

Wagons and trucks waddle along the rows,
sideboards clapping
‘til they are stilled by the yield they envelope.

Gorged.

Soon the beans lie resting in graneries,
pausing before bein’ changed
into the food chain

Where only the fortunate will benefit.

O please, “Give all this day earth’s daily bread”
—a prayer our “thriving” systems defy God to answer.

The stubbled rows now wait for winter,
cycling always;

Responding to the farmer’s plan
and heaven’s will.

Providence, for months disguised,
is now unveiled in October’s yield.

Her fruitfulness having been
scattered on stubby stalks
is now collected,
having yielded
to the harvest.

— Lee Van Ham