

# Barren Manor by Peter Bankson

This field will never grow another row of corn.  
The proud house, manor for a baron, lies in state  
at just the perfect place  
to watch the sun rise through the woods,  
her painted toenails brazen in the morning sun.

The baron has no serfs.  
He drives his own John Deere  
to keep his mistress' skirts arranged  
in careful disarray.

At this time every year  
the baron takes a month to surf at Molokai,  
and while he's out of town,  
his mistress takes a lover –  
a weathered man in dirty jeans  
who brings his mower  
in a pickup truck the baron cannot tolerate:  
The baron's Porsche  
lounges, sneering, in the place of honor  
where the well once stood.

The lover tends the field  
as though it were his own:  
with gentle, calloused hands  
he trims and rakes the baron's putting green.

At noon, the harvest neatly stored in plastic bags,  
he stops for one last soulful look,  
across the hill  
he walked those thirty years  
between the house and barn.

The sod has never taken well beside the drive.  
It is a challenge to the baron.  
It took the builder too much herbicide

to kill the oak that stood beside the well.

The air is heavy  
from last week's cremation of the sunrise woods.  
Pale tan and silver sprouts grow quickly  
as another manor springs to life  
in just the perfect place to watch the rising sun.  
This field will never grow another row of corn.