

THE OLD MCLEMORE PLACE

Jim Barton

I can feel, more than see, their presence
in the shadows beneath these old oaks;
their whispers the breeze that stirs in the trees,
rising like cookfire smoke.

The house has been gone for years now,
the fencewire rusted with time;
the occasional post, a weathered old ghost,
lies covered in bramble and vine.

But here is the path to their garden,
where their sweat salted many a meal;
where the tooth of the plow turned what is now
a carapace, a crust, and a seal.

And here is the path to the creek-bed
which flowed free and clear in its time;
the Spring and the Fall brought water for all,
the Summer and Winter were dry.

The last man to live here is gone now,
few even remember his face;
and yet, to this day, the locals still say
“Oh, that’s the old McLemore Place.”

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