

Encyclopedia of the Wheat

1

According to its stories,
the wheat began in darkness.
Every time a stalk of wheat died,
the sun gained one spark.

2

The wheat knows two dances:
a. The Sea
b. The Sea Snake

3

One of the wheat's songs is called
Blind Season, Gold Season.

4

Bread is the afterlife.
The transformation is so powerful
it causes those who eat bread
dreams of astonishing languages,
swallowing moons, or wasps.

5

If grass is *the beautiful uncut hair
of graves*, the wheat is the wild,
unkempt beard of Walt Whitman.

6

I said to the wheat, O wheat,
family dog of crops,
curl in my lap and sleep awhile.

7

When the wheat makes love, its face
grows beautiful and thick and explodes
into thousands of little mouths.
They are like the mouths of boys at an awkward prom,
twitching, desperate for a taste of Earth's huge breasts.

8

Human eyes are not still enough
to see the eyes of the wheat.

9

If you talk to the wheat
it will answer you and cry
when you walk away.

10

The wheat hates the line
amber waves of grain.
It is drafting a petition
on the bones of your forebears.

11

The wheat's nickname for the combine: *dough horse.*

12

Wheat comes from *white*,
named for the color of the wheat's
edible bones.
But first it was *hwāēt*,
and before that *svētū*, light,

and before that *svitati*, to dawn,
and before that *švidūs*, white-gleaming.

13

The wheat's name for you is secret.

14

Rain is the wheat's money.
On payday, each stalk takes
an equal portion of coins.

15

The wheat has no ears, and it
doesn't want you to talk about it.

16

Much is not passed down
because the wheat's way of praying
is to try to forget.

17

The wheat is embarrassed to be in love
with its beautiful cousin, Winter Wheat.

18

If there weren't humans, all the wheat
would disappear in fifty years, said someone.
This is consistent with its story of the end,
which begins, *And then the ones with hands
began to vanish in great numbers into the sky.*

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