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Adam

Michael Skau

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Adam

by Michael Skau

Split knuckles, thorn-torn calves, and nose broken
by a trick of the plow, soles bruised and palms calloused,
a back so wrenched and muscle-sprung it just
barely bends to the work demanded by sin,
sun-headaches, gagging thirst that cracks choking
coughs of bitter vile phlegm which looks like rust,
sprains, pains we can't express—body flaws must
and can be borne by mounds of bone, flesh, skin.

That we could stand. But, Lord, to lose the plush
of ripe gardens, of sensual youth, of real
words precise—to not live naked and unawed
by time, the steady onward pity rush
of days and years and age. To make us feel
a sense of loss was the greatest crime of God.

