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Thunder's Shadow

John Jenkinson

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Thunder's Shadow

by John Jenkinson

My shadow's little night, taller
Than Mr. Lincoln, crosses the lush green
Graves of the Union Army, suffers
The blank erosion of their stones.

Here where the hardtack Yankees broke
Rebellion's back, held their ground
Before the fury of grape, the shock
Of massed bayonets, of unbound

Lives propelled by statehood's passion
Far beyond our current notions
Of the local, their homeland loyalties
Narrowed to a band of counties,

A shrike whistles to his mate
As tin leaves shiver down the thin,
Cool afternoon. South of town,
Little Round-top flares, ignited

By the westward falling sun.
Drawn by two dun, long-eared horses,
A Van Tassel runabout passes,
Its fragile clip-clop thunder blunted

By the blare of tourist cars,
By the clash of plastic sabers.

