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## field hand / North Elm Christian

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*well-directed energy*

## field hand

*By Sheryl L. Nelms*

working  
day after day  
in the heat  
and dust

it was not the feel  
of grasping green vines  
clinging  
to my skin  
as I reached  
through to the red

and it was not  
that itchy yellow stain  
on my arms

and it was not the taste  
because there was never  
time to eat  
any

and it was not the sound  
of the tractor  
pushing us  
along

the essence is there in  
that nippy vine odor  
one whiff puts me  
back into  
that hot  
Kansas field

on hands and knees  
sweating  
back aching

picking

filling endless peck baskets  
with red tomatoes

*memories*

## North Elm Christian

*By Sheryl L. Nelms*

squared  
solid beside  
a meander of Mission Creek

it stood through a century

white steeples  
stately pointing  
the way

Mother and Father  
married there  
in lace and rice  
in '39

Thanksgiving potlucks  
I spent there  
under the  
kissings and pappings  
and "my how tall you've grown"

then in '62  
the year it was leveled  
the Smiths convened  
for Gram and Gramp's  
golden celebration

seven tiers of angel food high

five generations caught  
in one quick  
click

forever  
there