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field hand / North Elm Christian

Sheryl L. Nelms

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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 steepled
stately pointing
the way

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

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

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