



barbwire

holds its ground



BARBWIRE HOLDS ITS GROUND

and prospered in Western Kansas

the land of the Wind.

Barbed wire held the ground

and the sky

and the land

Acknowledgments: JUNIPER PRESS,

MODERN HAIRY, OUTCH, SUN-LOUIS

HAIRY, and UZZAWO.

Randy Brooks

High/Cos Cheapbook #9

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To my ancestors who homesteaded
and prospered in Western Kansas,
the land of the South Winds.

Acknowledgements: JUNIPER PRESS,
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HAIKU, and UZZANO.

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barbwire holds its ground
Buffalo Sky
roams the prairie

electric pump
instead of windmill--
where will Mockingbird nest?

fire ants cultivate
their corner
of the field

prairie trees grow
into Southern winds
and bend North



against the horizon
grain elevators
number the towns

today
the dirt road follows
the exact route of wagon wheels

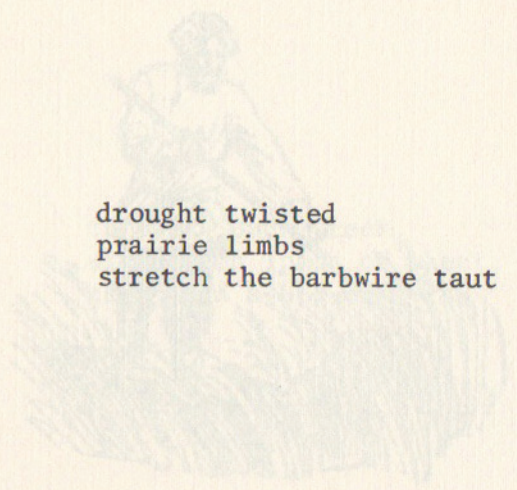
in Kansas
all the car windows
fill up with sky

sandhill plums
in the creekbed gather
dirt farmers & their wives

a kid wallows
in the rain pool:
cattle wait

circling the sun
a hawk
wingtip-pivots

beyond yellow grass
wheat rustles:
the sun! the sun!

A faint, light blue pencil sketch of a person sitting in a field. The person is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the page, facing right. They appear to be sitting on the ground, with their legs bent. The background consists of several horizontal, slightly wavy lines, suggesting a field or a body of water. The overall tone is soft and artistic.

drought twisted
prairie limbs
stretch the barbwire taut

the old
a few
winged-pigeons



to cross Buck Creek
with wagon loads of wheat,
they laid a bed of straw

aluminum cans & candy wrappers
blooming
along the Santa Fe Trail

late afternoon:
cattle lie
in billboard shade

returned too late:
wheat stubble
poking up

chalked with dust
after the harvest,
mud cakes in his wrinkles

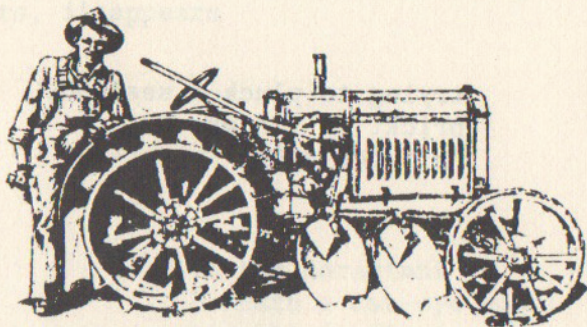
wind sweeps away
black smoke:
black earth remains

across the fire line
wild-eyed horses snort,
prance on black land

buffalo grass:
a prairie chicken
appears, disappears

in the horsetank
beneath a cat-eye moon,
blackbirds float

trying to pluck a seedpod,
prickt my finger
on Yucca spine



rhythmic popping
of a John Deere "Johnny Pop"
cultivates the prairie

dust bowls up
into a devil's wind:
farmer tries to plow

behind the plow
blackbirds cackle
worms in the furrows

after the Indian treaty
everywhere
drifts of buffalo bones

orange in yellow grass:
the rusted skeleton
of a Colt-45

beside the chicken house
a cantaloupe skin
picked clean

tumbleweed browns
in the sun
strung on wire

the old man watches
the windmill continue
to spin, creak

rancher makes his path
across the range
driving on it

see how many winters
have worn
the buffalo's coat



tail rider of the drive,
bandana over his mouth,
eats dust

sun-yellow sunflowers
face the sun
till the sun sets

scrambled on the range
dirt farmer feels
dirt farmer's home

dirt farmer's wife
at the screen door:
no tractor sound

after the hillside
every corner post
dirt-capped

tail rider of the drive,
crouched over his pouch,
waiting.

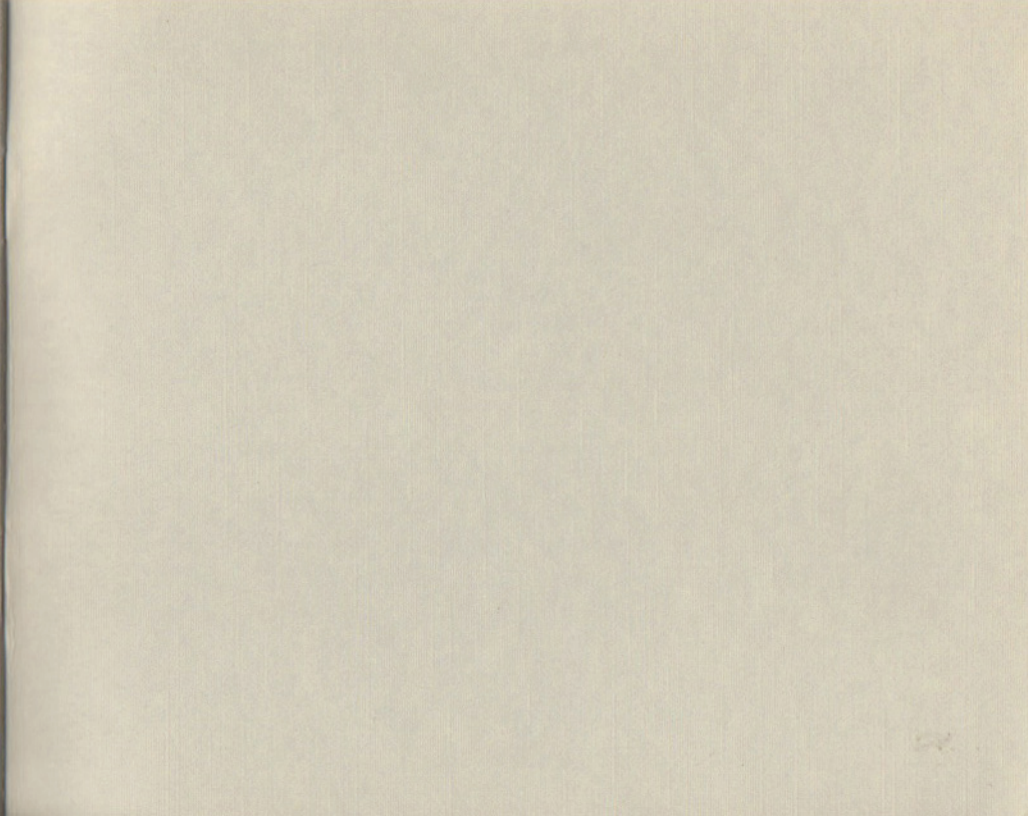
leaving two toes
in the steel snare--
lobo wolf's new name

up-yellow sunflowers
face the sun
till the sun sets

snowblind on the range:
dirt farmer feels
barbwire home

after the blizzard
every corral post
dunce-capped

everywhere I look,
a horizon
far away



\$1.75

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Randy Brooks grew up in Western Kansas where his grandfathers, William Lloyd Brooks and Jay S. Andrews, have farmed and ranched their entire lives. He graduated summa cum laude from Ball State University and has received an M.A. from Purdue University. He teaches developmental writing at Purdue while completing his Ph.D. in American Literature. He is widely published in the haiku magazines and this is his third chapbook. Previous titles include THE ROSEBUD BURSTS (High/Coo Press) and WHERE WILL MOCKING-BIRD NEST? (Juniper Press). He is co-editor and publisher of HIGH/COO PRESS.

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