

Found Haiku

JQ Zheng



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from

Eudora Welty's *Delta Wedding*

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Acknowledgments

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Delta Wedding by Eudora Welty (Orlando: Harcourt, 1973)

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As if a hand reached along the green ridge and all of a sudden pulled down with a sweep, like a scoop in the bin, the hill and every tree in the world and left cotton fields, the Delta began....In the Delta, most of the world seemed sky. The clouds were large—larger than horses or houses....the sunsets were reddest light. The sun went down lopsided and wide as a rose on a stem in the west, and the west was a milk-white edge, like the foam of the sea. The sky, the field, the little track, and the bayou, over and over—all that had been bright or dark was now one color.

—Eudora Welty, *Delta Wedding*

Just north of town, the high terraced loess hill on which rests the marble-faced headquarters of the Mississippi Chemical Corporation provides the most majestic and intimate vista I have ever seen of the Delta: the cypress trees in the mossy swampland, the cotton fields, the vast alluvia sweeping to the farthest reaches of the copious horizons. Not very long ago during a Sunday afternoon's drive I took Eudora Welty up there. "That's it," she said, as she gazed downward. "That's the Delta."

—Willie Morris, *My Mississippi*

1

Delta breeze—
a yellow butterfly
through the window

2

September cry—
thousands of locusts urgent
at open windows

3

Delta land—
a dragonfly's wing
shimmering

4

hidden track
through cotton fields—
a train of dust

5

a green bayou
in the pecan grove—
dim summer light

6

evening glow—
a song out of a window
of a tall white house

7

snow-white moon—
a thrush's waterlike notes from
the sweet-olive tree

8

narrow walk—
vanishing of sound
into dusk

9

summer evening
an old blue cooler
on the back porch

10

return from Greenwood—
piles of snap beans
on the porch table

11

red sunset—
a watermelon
split to the heart

12

plantation nights—
moon vine and Cape jessamines
into memory

13

a frog's croak—
the silvery creak of
the porch swing

14

Delta summer—
slapping a mosquito
on the cheek

15

plantation supper—
turkey breast, gizzard and wing
on Laura's plate

16

Ouch!—
eating turkey the boy
bites his finger

17

plantation family—
a great cage full of
tropical birds

18

late for supper
Dabney has a wishbone—
a heart on her plate

19

the newly wed jump
enchanted in the river—
moonlight splashing

20

summer moonshine—
the dripping girl
out of the river

21

cotton-picking time—
the wagon is loaded
with white clouds

22

he looks at the sky—
a yellow butterfly
flaps across his gaze

23

faint thunder—
the song of cotton pickers
from distant fields

24

bright butterflies—
bits of sunlight coming through
a magnolia

25

visiting her aunt
Dabney is licked by
two pale bird dogs

26

this small Delta town—
a store, a gin, a bridge and
one big house

27

birdsong—
faint wind from the bayou
touches the girl's hair

28

still woods—
a muscadine falls
into the leaves

29

a dove cry—
the girl's laugh rising
over the yard

30

over and over
a dove's high and low notes
from the bayou woods

31

rest by the window—
a whippoorwill is calling
down in the bayou

32

talk at the round table—
a June bug flies on a thread
tied to a boy's chair

33

no longer for play—
a dulcimer hanging
on the white-washed wall

34

morning sunshine—
a girl pony-trotting
on the front porch

35

holding a pose
before the long mirror
the bride smiles

36

spots of sunlight—
mounted yellow butterflies
on the white wall

37

missing her dead husband—
a little kiss
on the back of the neck

38

quiet spring dawn—
the darkened wood fences
swollen with night dew

39

the bayou rustles—
her progress
fades in

40

a swamp butterfly
dancing away into cypresses
catches her gaze

41

a dim blue of haze
hanging low among hay bales—
grandfather's long robe

42

a mother bird dog—
her worn teats flap up and down
as she pants in heat

43

summer breeze—
her soft smile under
the yellow brim

44

hot summer noon—
a girl sits on the porch
eating ice

45

in the heat
white fields dart light—
a prism edge

46

this Delta heat—
she shades her eyes and looks
around for a tree

47

out of the field
sweat on the black girl's forehead
pearls in the gloom

48

the black girl's wild eyes
hold a gaze on the white fields
and white glaring sky

49

she kicks off her high heels
and stretches her bare feet—
this country road

50

crazy with heat
she sits in the cotton house
fanning herself with her skirt

51

a little light twinkling
far out on the river
this starless night

52

time to eat—
the plantation bell ringing
in the dense still noon

53

silence in the house—
chandelier prisms tinkling
in the hall breeze

54

she knocks on the door:
a burst of dinner-table laughter
from within the house

55

narrow bayou—
the water's edge is full of
cypress trees

56

a long flight of ducks
high in the sky—a ribbon
drawn by a finger

57

she touches the white key
a little far-off warm sound—
a shaft of sunlight

58

across the river
through the screen of trees
a dot of cabin

59

river of the death¹—
a rowboat coming out of
bloodred sunrise

60

at Delta wedding
women put handkerchiefs
to their eyes

¹ Yazoo River

61

after wedding
they pose for a family picture
one says, "Say cheese"

62

after bride and groom
drive away, the full moon
rises in the sky

63

through all the wild commotion,
a brown thrush in a tree
can be heard

64

a scratch at the back door—
her lovely cat brings in
a mole

65

Mary Denis calls
from Inverness—Baby George
has gained an ounce

66

that little old vine
has taken everything—she
pulls a long thread of it

67

snoring sound—
a bumblebee goes over
the abelia bells

68

sound of summer—
locust shells clinging to
the tree trunks

69

she pauses—
on an abelia a yellow butterfly
with black markings

70

morning cool—
robins feed
in the radius of the hose

71

a whole tree is
suddenly full of warblers—
how long will they stay?

72

the car whizzes through
the white fields toward Greenwood—
no one else in sight

73

faint thunder—
sycamore balls rolling
over the porch roof

74

home from the trip
the man reaches up to wind
the hall clock

75

summer wind—
the sewing machine whirring
on the sleeping porch

76

her long hair moves all over
as the girl dances—
summer waterfall

77

Delta autumn—
cotton is as far as
the cloudy sky

78

Delta night
noisy insects everywhere
audible twinkling

79

Delta sunset—
a red rose on a stem
down lopsided

80

flat Delta—
most of the world is
the blue sky

81

the day lengthens—
a boy driving a black mule
comes into the light

82

a white foxy dog
runs beside the Yellow Dog
barking and barking

83

the sun going down
endless cotton fields glowing—
a hearth in firelight

84

The Yellow Dog runs
past a twilighted gin and
the dark-gold Yazoo

85

the couple dancing
to the waltz—
a mistletoe in a tree

86

meeting fall
bayou cypresses are touched
with flame in leaves

87

day by day
dogwoods' buds going
brown and brown

88

longing for rain
dogwoods hang their
heart-shaped leaves

89

choosing the busiest time
the camellia bushes
have all set their buds

90

fall daybreak—
the grass all silver now
shows its white roots

91

this sky view—
a Dainty Bess holds a cluster of
five blooms in the air

92

the housewife pauses
in the yard: breath-of-spring leans
too much to look pretty

93

how lonely it is!—
a buzzard hanging up
in the deeps of sky

94

this Delta view—
the same white after white
covering the land

95

motherless girl
looks out—the morning sky
is fire-bright

96

homesick—Laura
waves at the Dog chugging
to Yazoo City

97

The Yellow Dog chugs along
its smoke a poodle tail
curled overhead

98

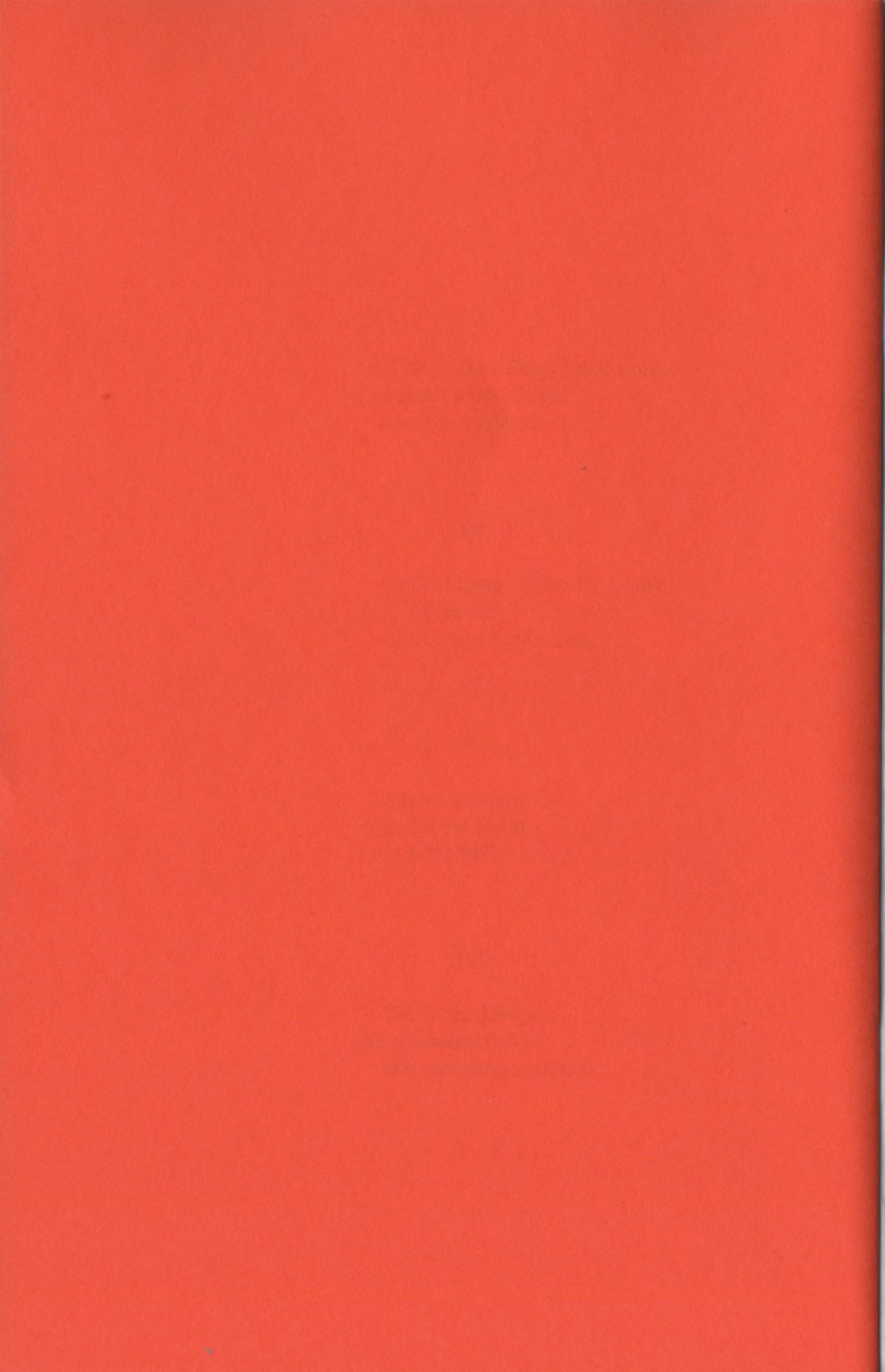
in the buggy pulled by a mule
a jug of iced tea
shaking and splashing

99

Laura is sleepy—
by night the Delta
is a big bed

100

life in the Delta—
the repeating fields
the repeating seasons



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