

Haying

by Ed Higgins

It is not unusual for farmers to see the future before it's begun—but I am not speaking here only of the need to hope but more, maybe, of just how the breath of June and new mown hay drift over the farm way past midnight letting you know that unimaginable goodness does exist right here, under our very noses sometimes, or anyway in those cut blades of grass and light purple-to-white clover heads (despite the sometimes sadness of bees crushed into the packed bales with them) waiting to later honey-scent even winter with all this dense treasure of rain, soil, sun, green fields, and toil.

Machine cut, raked, dried, turned, dried some more, all under the risk now of coming rain. Then, starting mid-morning, once the heavy overnight dew's off the windrows, steel-finger fed into my nearly antique John Deere baler's summer wakened, insatiable maw: thudding, packing, thudding, packing, tying twine through some mystery of mechanics I have never understood and fear one rain threatening day it will inevitably go wrong and I must fix it.

But for now still thudding, packing into the bale chamber, the piston endlessly pushing formed bales out the narrow bale chute toward a birth of sorts—with the mechanical knotters doing their tireless midwifery of tying off the double knotted cords of sisal twine.

Finally, the bales willfully ejected as fifty-five pound trussed green rectangles—assuming my adjustment's just right.

While too many acres later, past exhaustion's ability to take tally anymore, or pride even in fecundity's abstraction, I lift another heavy bale onto the hay trailer and into December's waiting.

