

A South Dakota Inventory, 1989

-Centennial Poem by David Allan Evans

Snow ticking on cornstalks; honking v's of geese at 3 a.m.
pulling spring back over farms, over neighborhoods;
wind rattling through corridors of stubble; the sound of
claws on bark; corn *pinging* from a shovel's lip; the *caw*
caw of crows; redwinged blackbirds' fierce metal
warbling; the two clean morning notes of the
chickadee—

Deer hightailing it; the badger looking up suddenly from
his half-clawed hole; the snapper orbiting from mud to
pasture to mud; a hawk's slow-motion glide; paddlefish
vacuuming the gloomy floors of dams; crows flapping
away from road-kills with plenty of time on their wings;
cattails swaying like car antennae; pine limbs weighed
down by snow—

The sudden tug on a fishing line, the rod-tip divining;
bullheads sucking air in shallow pails; hunters' boots
crunching snow; cottonwood leaves shimmering in
windy sunlight; moon-faced cattle; hog houses, hog
grunts; dead-end roads; auctioneers in white Stetsons;
graveyards on hills; the iron level sound of trains; the
rough softness of milkpods; seed hats—

That second sun, the October pumpkin; those yellow ventrilo-
quists, the meadowlarks; the Missouri swirling around
bluffs; December's frozen sun; flat stones skimming lake
water; the probing headlights of tractors in night fields;
silver water towers; rodeos; the smell of alfalfa;
quickdraw packinghouse hands; the grim smile of a
possum really dead—

Names of towns: Sinai, Eagle Butte, Deadwood, Aurora, Willow
Lake, Ipswich, Blunt, Faith, Lake Andes, Mound City,
Buffalo Gap, White River, Elk Point, Wessington Springs,
Potato Creek, Redfield, Winner, Woonsocket, Fort
Pierre, Trail City, Pine Ridge, Bonesteel, Sisseton, Wall,
Tea, Lead, Hayti—

Dogs chasing rabbits zigzagging across fields; ice houses with
portable tv's; the sun rising in alleys; one hundred
blackbirds suddenly flying up as one black wing and
away; garage sales; powwows; the earnest swing of
lunch pails on sidewalks at 6 a.m.; white country
churches; swiveling owl-looks; farm ponds; prairie
grass; nine sparrows neatly spaced on a powerline. . .

-*Kunming, China (1988)*

