

Some years later I reconstructed the first poem I ever wrote, in a high school English class 13 years earlier. It had been lost, somehow, but the sense of it remained in my head. The reconstruction is different, but it has the same general theme as the high school verse. Again, Pop is the hero:

Out of the Heart of an Old Farmer

Only give me one more quiet February morn –
the clean, quick strike of frost-filled air across my face
as winter sun, a dripping globe of red, comes
bulging through the somber spines of forest spreading
naked to the far-off, flat horizon.

Give me one more pungent drift of hickory wood smoke
winding out of columns climbing gray-black into blue
where a shaggy row of cattle waits to hear
the crunch of snowy crystals frozen white beneath my boots –
and after ecstasy of this I'll yield and go.