

earthworms and insect larvae. I used to walk behind the plow in bare feet, drinking in the smell of newly turned earth and squeezing my toes against the fresh coolness of the bottom of the furrow. Walking behind the gang plow that way I found my first Indian relict, a red jasper spearhead, just south of the corncrib. Forty-five years ago I wrote a verse about it.

The Red Spearhead

The boy's bare toes padded deliciously in the slick, black furrow
As Dell and Dot and Molly and Tom pulled the gang plow
Through the rich, black Illinois soil
In the warm summer sun.

And they sweated, and their harness creaked,
And the discs rustled as they sliced the sod.
And the man on the plow sat easily and admired
The sleek, strong buttocks of his team.

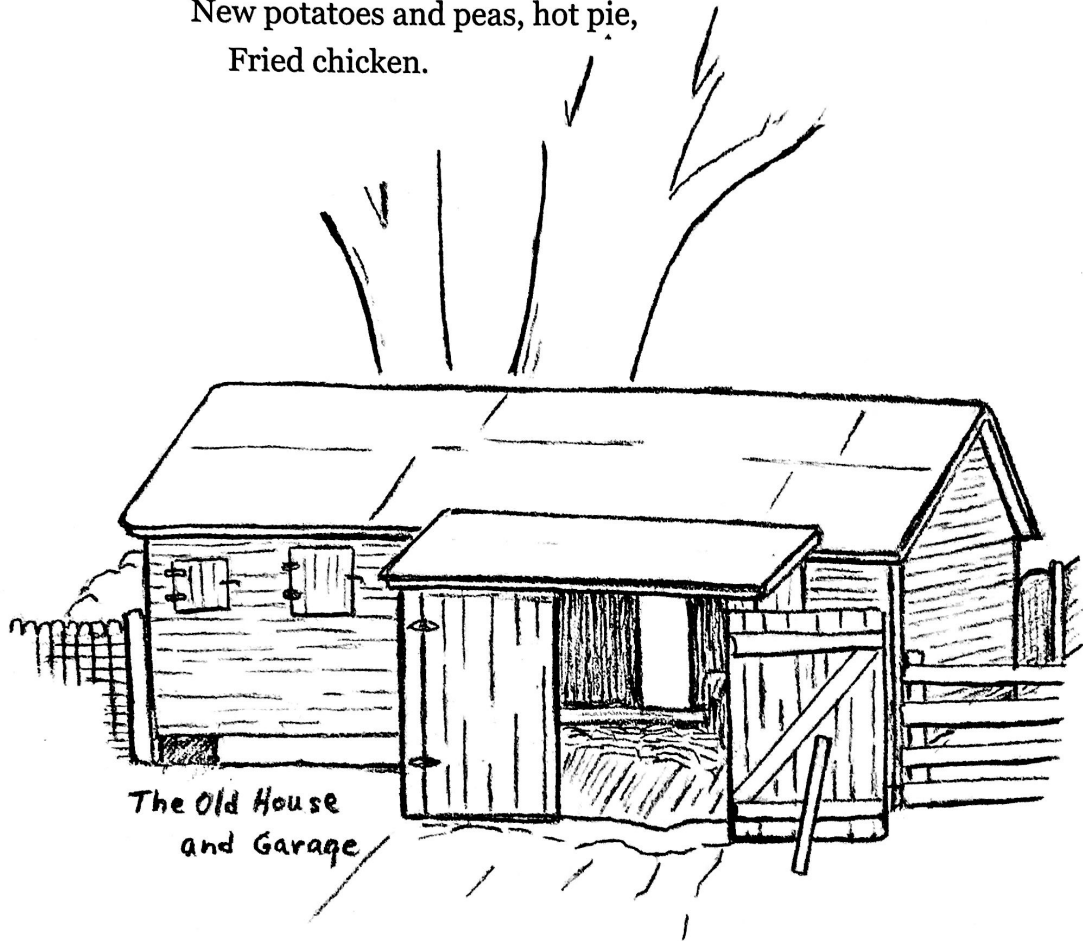
He watched the tittering kildeer,
Stalking jerkily in the turned earth,
Smelled the sweet odor of the fresh soil
And stared at the long straight furrow
Stretching ahead.

A white cloth hung in the still air,
Dangled from a pole at the house ahead,
And the farmer guided his horses around a clean, square corner
And stopped.

Unhitched his team and followed them
Up the dusty lane to the cool water tank,
Calling to the boy behind,
Who stood, staring at a glittering piece of red flint,
Sticking in the side of the soft, black furrow.

He tugged it out and raced excitedly to his father,
Washing dusty brown arms in the water tank,
“Must have belonged to a great warrior.”
And he turned the piece over and over
And started a story —

“Down there in the shell ground was an Indian village,
And over there on that hill, the stagecoach inn,
And old Mr. Seymour told me” — then the call,
“Dinner’s ready!” And they turned
And started toward the cool house,
New potatoes and peas, hot pie,
Fried chicken.



The Old House
and Garage