A Farmer at Confession

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Well, what would you do, Father,
if sinking your shovel into a potato field
you struck metal, and bending down
you uncovered a sword, crumbling with rust?
And you’ve got sweat burning your eyes
when you see this man, and somehow
you know he’s left-handed
and he’s got a scar under his eye
real shiny pink, like a pig’s snout.
I’m thinking “does he want this sword or what?”
so I drop it and go back to digging—
I’ve got kids, you know, two sons
and a daughter, Kate. Anyway,
I turn a few more piles of earth
and the heat is coming down real hard
when I find another sword, so heavy
I can’t lift it. And “what time is it?”
I’m thinking as I squint at the sun
and see some giant-sized man
with hair like fur and real small ears.
So small, I know he can’t hear the screams.
Thousands of them, buried so long
they’re black from reflecting the earth.
What would you do, press a blade
to your ear and listen for the roar?
Would you look up to see who
was watching? No Sir. When everything
has gone to dust except lingering blades
that can’t resurrect, like spirits stuck
somewhere between hell-fire and the sun,
you bury them, Father, beneath the mounds
of the quiet earth and walk away.