



1987

## Feed Mill Faces

James Papworth

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## FEED MILL FACES

Each morning  
sparrows come  
shrugging off the brownness  
of the only life they know.  
Cuddled in cracks  
they beak for lice.  
Streaked brick  
tells the story of their yesterdays.

Chunks of dung  
litter rat-goings;  
they stare hard in search of hunger.  
Listen:  
they hum as they shell red wheat.

Outside the feed mill  
on El Dorado  
bums belch  
and spit hooch phlegm.  
They hold their city  
in tied-up bags.  
Up and down the rail they trudge  
for nothing.  
Modesto. Madera. Fresno.  
Neighbors come and go.  
Faces roll by shades of soot,  
'gadung gadung gadung' of rail  
rattles them to sleep.

In dreams  
I see on the hard horizon  
rats with no eyes  
moving across the land.  
Sparrows circle and soar  
with red-caped heads.  
Bums have taken jobs.

James Papworth

## THIS, THE SUMMER

Of women single  
Who walk th'eased step  
Of women alone  
Who stay indoors  
During summer storms  
Watch the streams  
Slip down the pane  
Against the mesh of screen.

L. Danielle Beazer