

Cleo Griffith

After the Harvest

From his center in the scruffy field,
the scarecrow's button eyes
gleam brighter than the early evening star.
In his right hand made of red mitten
he holds a bird as black as coal.
Why does this brooding, sly raven befriend him?
Perhaps the glister of the eyes looked like tears
and the bird with unusual compassion
descended to speak soft syllables of consolation.
Or perhaps he only waits for the closing
of the eye to make some mischief.
Made of sticks, the scarecrow's left hand
stretches toward the fire of the setting sun.
He is ready to march, ready to lead
with the bird and the blaze
wherever...wherever.
Crooked mouth fixed in a cocky grin,
head of straw and cloth, body staked to standing,
he can only dream of adventure, of walk and talk.
Yet, one eye winks.
I swear it does.

Autumn

Feasts of golden fire
devour orchards of yellow apples,
acres of wheat turn more brilliant,
then black

Fall harvests burn as though
it was destiny
rust colors mingle with gray,
chaff with smoke

stormy scarves of dirty air
billow across the October sun
until it resembles a red moon

no Halloween witches could be more fearsome
than the drought-intense hunger
of flames which rake across
yesterdays' paradise.

Cleo Griffith was Chair of the Editorial Board of *Song of the San Joaquin* for twelve years, and remains on the Board. She has been published in *Homestead Review*, *Cider Press Review*, *Iodine*, *Main Street Rag*, *Miller's Pond*, *More Than Soil*, *More Than Sky: The Modesto Poets*, *POEM*, *the Aureorean*, *The Furnace Review*, *The Lyric*, *Tiger's Eye*, *Time of Singing* and others. She is a member of the Modesto CA Branch of the National League of American Pen Women. She lives in Salida, CA with her husband Tom and their aptly-named cat, Tank.