

*The Dustbowl*

*Also by Jim Goar*

Seoul Bus Poems

The Louisiana Purchase

Jim Goar

*The Dustbowl*

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For Sang-yeon

## NOTES FROM THE DUSTBOWL

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The '#' denotes the order of composition. The first poem of *The Dustbowl* was the tenth composed. These poems remain in the order written, though some poems have been discarded, including those beyond #91.

# The Dustbowl



Ghost town. Tumbleweed. Ain't  
got no home. Ain't got no home.  
But an echo. A stutter. The land  
like magic shit. Behold the  
dustbowl. That Damn-ward sun.  
Big as your fist. Sit on Plymouth  
Rock. I'll sit below. Con-  
templating West. Forget-me-not.

The slaughter of prophecy. Didn't see  
that coming. All my doves and not a single  
returned. The plan was simple. Forget  
the forest loomed. Blackbirds at  
my ear. Conversation. Bird language.  
No paper trail. My Grandfather in a  
nest. Didn't ask the question. Not  
eggs of plenty. Each memory a wife.  
Yoke me she said. Yoke her I did.  
I don't work there anymore.

When the wind blows  
night. And the cows roll  
home. Listen for minor  
keys. Arrive without a  
name. A Texas Ranger.  
Maybe. The Grail in tow.  
Ride on out of town. Leave.  
But slowly. April in the waste-  
land. In No-Man's-Land. In snow.

Let me recap: At the time  
there were no bad guys.  
Wrote myself into a corner.  
Needed a Christmas Dinner. A  
knight more pure than green.  
A noble calling. Pulled Galahad  
from the lake. Intended to  
sleep under his wet blanket. And  
then another. Stole your life  
preserver. Pirates on the Florida  
coast. Not worthy of the Grail.

I am a radio short and stout. Didn't want  
to spoil the end. Returned to a red and  
black dragon. Knew the priest was  
your father. Way down in a hole. No  
chance. Always rolling loaded dice. A  
different game. Told what I could. Grails  
on the outfield fence. Blooming cloud of  
good. See? Exported cricket with Arthur.  
Now yours. Keep them well. A little boy  
fell in a well. An evil sister closing in.

Kept a false Grail amongst her  
knightly things. Drank from  
that cold winter cup. Knew  
the red coats were waiting.  
One Mississippi. Two miss-  
issippi. A flood of bad English.  
No-man's-land in sight. The ocean  
under-stood. A fish out of water.  
Knock-knock. Who's there?  
Poor Galahad on Mars.

Pinned the Grail to my chest. Promised a return. Rode into the desert. Never saw me again. Became the wild frontier. Bore dustbowls. Made depressions. Lived in your heartlands. Imagined heaven. My promised return. The quest-ion unmasked. Think of me when the clouds are burning. The oceans boiling. A Grail in the midnight sun. Unseen.

Ate the Serpent's heart. Learned  
bird language. Called my darling  
dear. Coo-coo-ca-coo. Never  
coming home. Again. Simple. All  
that serpent blood. A taste for  
something new. Left Ireland for  
Iceland for a tropical island. Grew  
the sword from a rubber tree. Pulled  
but Elaine held tight. The same old song.  
In a magical stutter. Galahad was born.

The intensity of this game. Candlestick when it was open. Poetry does Not Matter. The game is played on paper. The pen is mightier. Then wind. Hurricanes in the heartland. Signals from Korea. The game has moved to extra inning. Orange seats un-sat. The infield has moved out. The outfield has moved in. No explanation given. Real as a double play. Silent except for his radio.

Children should not sing. The Anthem  
is mightier. Static instead of words. The  
Flag is not there. Behold the empty  
sky. A dustbowl hovering. The wasteland's  
blown in. How quickly things change. Carry  
my heart in a bucket. The earth remains  
broken. Splinters in the perilous seat. All  
my loves and not a single returned.

Asked the magician for her  
hand. An older text. The con-  
fusion runs deep. Nu-go-eye-o?  
Who are you? The pen-dragon.  
Again. Nothing new on this earth.  
The same old song and dance.  
Notes from the deepest space.  
Traveling. Ain't got no home. A  
blooming cloud of dust. The Big  
Dipper. No horn of plenty. Chased  
round and round the Round Table.  
Her final broadcast. Repeating.

Didn't ask for much. The blood  
of a child. No father. Pushed  
baby Jesus into the Nile. Crawled  
way down in a hole. Talked worm  
language. Waited in your heartland.  
Plotted my return. Needed a knight  
more pure than green. Your little boy  
fell in a well. I am the radio closing in.