

Barn Poetry

Subject: Social Studies: Agriculture: Language Arts: Agriculture

Grade Level: 6-8

McRel Standards: US History Era 6: The development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900)

Benchmark: Understands how the rise of corporations, heavy industry, and mechanized farming transformed American society.

Iowa Model Core Literacy: Writing: Uses writing as a tool for learning
Curriculum: Uses an effective writing process
Uses knowledge of purpose, audience formant, and medium in developing written communication.

Anticipatory Set: A barn on a farm has always been a hub of activity. The traditional barn in history might have been a place for a farmer to store his grain, shelter his livestock, repair broken farming equipment and milk the cows. Each barn has a unique story to tell, just as the livestock who lived and worked there, and the families that built and used the barns.

Purpose: Students will read the following excerpts from the barn poetry to understand the importance and the history of a barn on a farmstead.

Teaching to the Objective:

1. Teacher will duplicate poetry and hand out to students in groups.
2. The students will read poetry together in a group and come up with a list of characteristics of barns.
3. Students will share characteristics of the barns.
4. Students will then determine the author's purpose in sharing the poem.
5. Students will be able to write a short paragraph on why they think that barns were important to people who shared their writing.
- 6.

Assessment: Students will create their own barn poem and illustrate the poem according to the guidelines established by the instructor.

Ode to Barns Past

Conceived in need, and built with pride,
by careful loving hands.
Mystique, with styles of purpose blend,
from your ancestral lands.

Your mow and stall made food for all,
with plenty left to sell.
You've sheltered countless herds and flocks,
and served your masters well.

Technology, or laziness,
It's hard to trace the blame.
For our neglect of your distress,
we all share common shame.

As future craftsmen reconstruct
your every joint and truss,
may history be as kind to you
as you have been to us.

A death no reason justifies,
a tragic way to end.
So as we say our last goodbyes,
we must add, "Thank You, Friend".

Richard Talada (1990)

An Old Barn For Paul

Under the straightness
Of the nearby silo that is domed
Like an Orthodox cathedral

An old barn near the road
Leans twenty degrees
In a southern direction

A door hangs diagonal
Held in place
By one rusted hinge

Nothing is plumb but every
Line is bent by neglect
Twisted to dereliction

Soon it will go completely South
Its boards and beams like turkey bones
Left in a platter

Each window frames
A broken glass pane
That is a portal for swallows

Sunlight shines through wide
Seams between planks onto machinery
Painted red by rust

And sleeping in darkness
Like a farmer napping in the hay
On an autumn afternoon

Doug Tanoury

Vanishing Barn

The man's barn is the man's worth
The cedar's pungency, the mow and the light
These legacies of line and scale
Thatch, shingle, gable and slate
From soil to shelter, from timber, honey coloured
Rubbings from hay and straw, now lichen covered,
This rhythm of the bays,
That faint hickory creak,
Those fiddler tunes,
In rafters where love once hid.

The vanishing barn, its simplicity bends slowly,
Geometry ages on the brace,
Beams hugged by dowels of oak
Where cobwebbed corners once held a song.
Quebec, Chester County, the pilgrim's grip,
The threshing floor, between cows and calf, came his step
On the echo of pigeons wings,
Beauty had this space -
Porch whispers, silence shape,
The earthy smell of harvests long past.

Paul Kloppenborg

Old Barn

Vance Oliphant

Just down the road... around the bend,
Stands an old empty barn; nearing the end.

It has sheltered no animals for many years;
No dairy cows, no horses, no sheep, no steers.

The neigh of a horse; the low of a cow;
Those sounds have been absent for some time now.

There was a time when the loft was full of hay,
And the resounding echoes of children at play.

At one time the paint was a bold shade of red;
Gradually faded by weather and the sun overhead.

The doors swing in the wind... the hinges are loose,
Windows and siding have taken a lot of abuse.

The fork, rope and pulleys lifted hay to the mow,
A task that always brought sweat to the brow.

But those good days are gone; forever it seems,
And that old barn now stands with sagging beams.

It is now home to pigeons, rats and mice;
The interior is tattered and doesn't look very nice.

Old, abandoned barns have become a trend,
Just down the road... around the bend.

Poetry courtesy www.thebarnjournal.org