Haying

Peter Wild
HAYING

Before adobes can happen
someone has to dig a pit.
it goes straight down before the jogging shovels
stirring up the worst monsters,
    which whirl out, flume off
across the desert in a column
    of fire laced with crackling spit,
the kind that earnest Moses followed through the wilderness
seeing the cities in his head. the hands
however, being wiser, simply stand aside
and watch it roar out like a captured bear
too big and fierce for them to handle,
a drunken sailor released from the hole in search
of something intelligent to tear up.
then it's done, the green mud at its season
    and the couple is installed,
holding the little fluffy dog dressed
in paper clothes cut from magazines,
the man looking out the crooked windows
to see which directions the clouds will take,
the wife lifting up lids and peering down the stove,
bending to the hollow roots to listen
where that narrowing, those braids
and clash of whispers come from.
but already the hay is shooting up white,
and the men are out, earth come alive,
stern earth bent over earth cutting it
while the girls stand atop the stacks,
lifesavers shouting down at them.
but inside the family is so safe because
this is all around them, so busy
wondering at it, that the grass spears right up
through the dirt floor between their toes,
    a torture
so mild they hardly feel a thing.