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We Judge the Soil

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Description (Optional)

A poem exploring soil judging and familial life in an agrarian community.

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About the Contributor (Optional)

Sam Armstrong is an English major at Cedarville University. He is almost always hungry.

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As children we shoveled chest deep holes
in the furrowed, rotated field beyond our blacktop.
Our clay-covered hands worming into eluviation.
Clawing into tiny, earthen casks by the afternoon tomatoes.
Your offspring giggled in the cardinal air.
The funereal scene filed into your camera
just years before your father left the farm
to bend into a larger cask, makeuped and silent
as cement.

But, birthed into the soil,
we survey and judge it. We eat the fruit
that comes packaged from it.
We spit into, lodge milk cartons into,
and jealously scramble over to shit into the soil,

until your last peach-laden dinner plate is broken.
And the rufous-sided towhee screens
from a hidden aspen.
The soil had long ago eaten the
herds of cows, litters of kittens, and scant country rats.
And, as we peer through our cobweb-cornered windows
at the crabapple dividing our lawns,
we wait to see when the soil will call us back
to claim our quivering bodies,
hands first.