

David Walker

BEGINNING THE GARDEN

(for Walt Whitman, and Addison Chase)

A man is plowing our field
to bear those things the earth
will bear;

 a rusty spade, his beard
wags over his horse's rump, and even
his freckles wink at the sunlight.

He is coming back
to us, he promises, each year:
to see we grow things right, to check
our lives in greens, in reds
of tomatoes, yellows of squash and beans.

At the end, he scratches his head
quizzically, then slouches off.
Haughtier, electric, his horse pauses
to drop one steaming clump--a fertile
afterthought--to start us right.