

Shirrtail Poet in His State

A shirrtail poet and his pencil
celebrate the universal grin
of a clear night as the whippoorwill
calcalls from beyond the sumac.
His bedrock study of petrified predecessors
followed the sun all afternoon,
and now he watches his fire,
listening to the stripper wells of
a shirrtail oilman, clobbering the dark,
pulling up crude for cars far away,
their^xdumbfounding the sun in cities.
But here behind the tangle of chain and
padlock on the pasture gate, here
in the little Leavenworth of prairie,
the square cell of the section lines
out of sight, he might think himself
A woodcut of contentment.
He calls to mind the ease of the loafer
nighthawk on the road coming in, the dust
from the car tires recalibrated
in the wind, spiderwort waving its blues
from the ditch,
Over the inland sea of green, over the June
day, the quiet dark, the little man
and his pencil, who padlocks his night
with a lame grin, and goes to bedroll.

S. Hind
Nov. '92

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