

THE CLANK OF LOOSE BLADES

After the missile crisis
the young man was assigned
to infiltrate, meet the Cubans
speak the language, become part of the society.
And he did until deception was no longer possible
and his talking stopped.
He returned to West Texas
to stay in the bunkhouse with the range hands
and focus his gaze on the spurs
that jangled from the cowboys' boots.

In the evening the young man
would open the bunkhouse window
though nights were beginning to turn cool
and the range hands objected.
He lay beneath that window every night
From November to March
And slowly regained his smile,
Hesitantly turned his eyes
Toward other people.
He began to speak.

It was the windmill that saved him,
not the water it pumped
nor the breeze that drove it,
but the clank of loose blades,
the squeak of worn gears:
the comforting, never-stopping sounds
that droned into a Texas sky rising up
from the ground uninterrupted by trees,
sounds that spoke his language
and told him he was home.

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