

My verses are the kind only a few tolerant friends and relatives are likely to appreciate. But they transmit some of my most intense feelings, and it occurs to me only now that Pop has inspired more of them than any other person. In 1946, when I was a freshman in college, I wrote the second “poem” of my life, and it was about Pop, partly I expect because I was sensitive already to the fact that his life was in rapid and irreversible decline.

### Illinois Farmer

He is strongly built, and his arms are tanned,  
his face is brown and his temples gray;  
his face is tired, and yet –  
in that lined face there seems to be  
a certain pleasant quality.

His shoulders are slightly stooped,  
the sweat-stained hat is tilted back,  
bony fingers on a gnarled hand  
push back a thinning mop of gray  
and a weary voice speaks quietly.

“Oh yes, I’ve had my share of trouble,  
and maybe just a little more –  
but I’ll not complain, for I believe,  
I’ve had my share of good things too.”

And the tired face seems satisfied  
as his eyes light up with quiet pride,  
sweep the good rich land and come to rest  
on two staunch boys beside,  
“No,” he says, “I’ll not complain.”