

## Doug of Brushy Run

Sifting through a life  
    memories stacked under cobwebs  
    craftmanship curled in wood shavings  
    genius written in dust  
Fiddles, guitars, autoharps and wash-tub bass  
    standing in corners  
    hanging from exposed barn walls  
Their music all silenced by death

    A simple life  
    A complex man

Shiny red wooden pole barn  
    hand built structure touching the sky  
    with plank-deck porch added  
    for hoedowns and starlit contra dances  
Sleeping porch stretched on beams  
    over a curving creek  
    its gurgling lullaby  
    a natural sound machine for slumber

Cello-neck handle opens the screen door  
    weighted by a jar of small stones  
I open and close the door, watching  
    up and down  
    up and down  
my emotions following each rise and descent  
    of the counterweight

Claw-foot tub secluded in an outdoor "spa"  
    heated water for bathing under a canopy of trees  
    blue towel stretched over a wire  
    dry and awaiting

I walk the muddy paths  
    tracing thousands of my brother's footsteps  
    tell-tale trails of countless days  
    lost in planning, dreaming in brilliance  
    working in wood, black dirt, and bronze

Kansas acres known as Brushy Run  
the name, a line in a favorite song  
he returned to the soil, sweat, and hard-scrap survival  
our parents fled  
they, never understanding a rejection of the modern  
and a return to the old

Solar panels hidden behind a tin barrier  
next to raised vegetable beds  
remains of last year's garden  
permaculture planting  
organically treated soil  
irrigated by run-off of captured rainwater

He, who never attended college,  
garnered attention from university professors  
who sent students to study his designs

The ground lays fallow and hard—mourning—  
awaiting the planting and clearing away of winter debris  
that will never come

His ancient maroon tractor, righted now,  
with crushed seat and bent metal frame  
gears never to be shifted again  
stands witness to a fatal mistake

one miscalculation  
among thousands of correct decisions

A small patch of color, tucked in a corner of the yard  
red tulips arching  
and waving in the wind  
call me to pluck the brightest and best  
to place ruby blooms  
in a wine glass vase

A memorial, a reminder  
that beauty can arise from ashes  
and life can follow death