

Floyd Nixon's Place



Rural Electrification

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This is Floyd Nixon's Place.

I would be surprised if he is still alive, but I know it was his place because there are still tax bills in his kitchen with his name on them. The place is a farm in rural Ontario, like so many others.

It is still farmed but I was more interested in the abandoned buildings than the soil.

Here is Floyd's front room, complete with fashionable wallpapers and a lovely overhead light.



A Roof Overhead

A roof overhead
to keep out the rain
metal drummed for years
slowly going red
with age

But it will outlast me
he figures
as he drives nail into dry shingle
that his father nailed to plank



A Roof Overhead II

Full size wood
to hold the roof
solid inch planks
to back the shingles

You think it's a risk
in deep winter
coal stove over-fed?

Wood has a soul
it doesn't give up easy

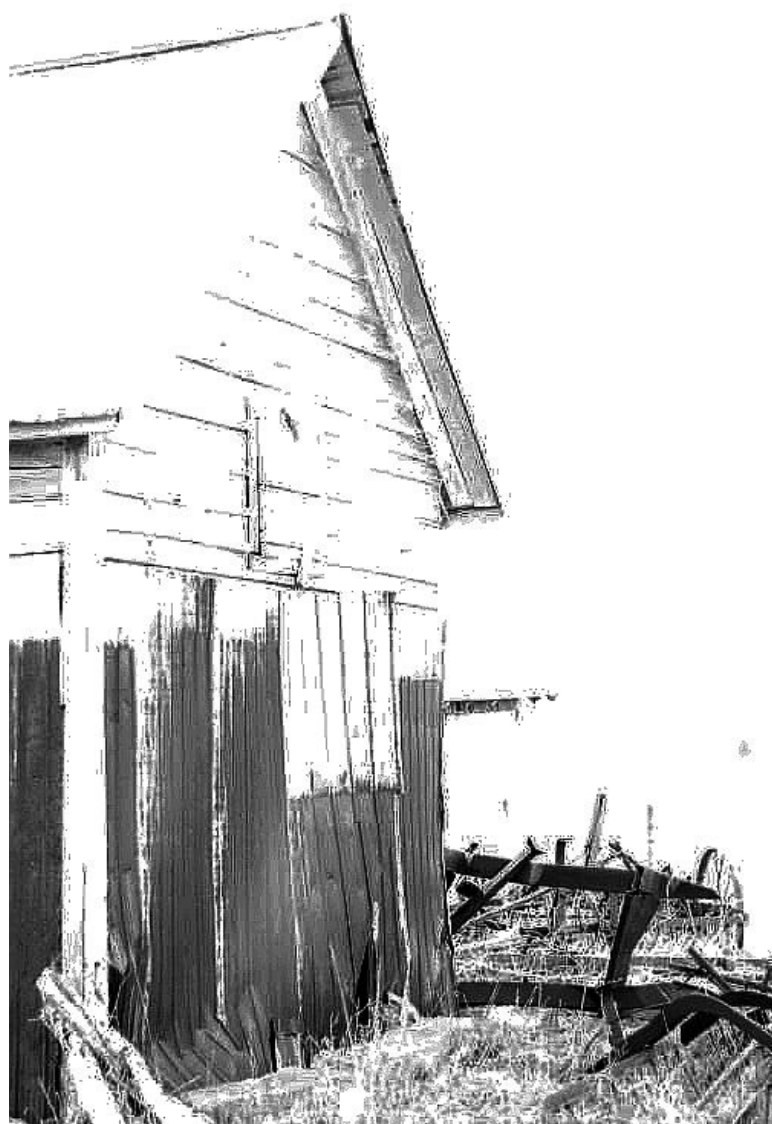
Like the land
Like the men who use it



Good Walls

Good walls
to stop the winter winds
to shelter the stock

Enough to hold the hay
fuel for bodies
that heat their own spaces
as long as there's feed



Good Walls II

We look back
we see sheds, barns
in black and white
romantic and pale

Never as it was
when it was built

Solid, clean and proud
purpose-built
man-powered



The Comforts of Home

Three rooms down
Three up
square, small

Steep stairs
and low ceilings

Heat rises
finds its way out
Big halls are cold
come February



The Comforts of Home II

Long winter nights
and small windows

Ceilings should be white
to spit the light
back at the kitchen table
where we can do the books



The Trappings of Life

Patent medicine
is sometimes all there is
when the snow piles up
over the fences

Doctors are in town
where the people are
where the money is

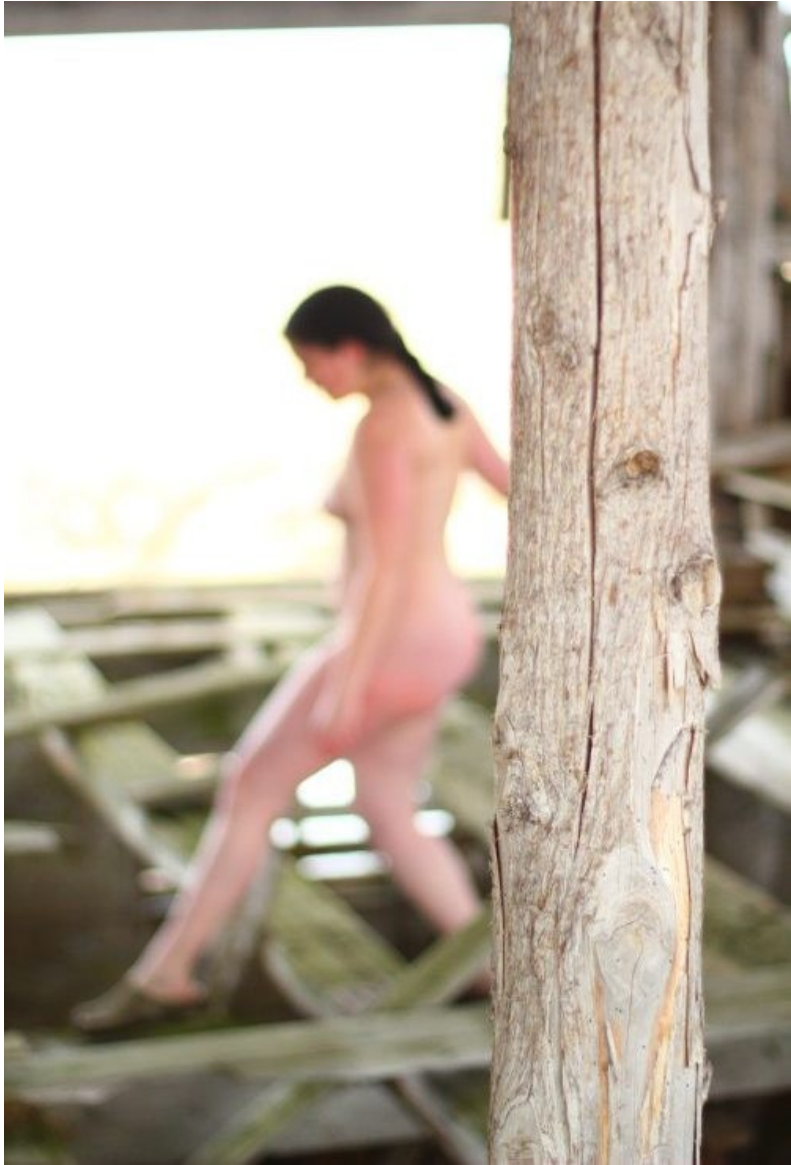
Palma Christe will do
for a home-canned diet
for what else ails



The Trappings of Life II

When the store
is three hours away
you learn to take care
of what you've got

A few minutes work
will preserve
will prevent the loss
of what you don't need to lose



A Stout Barn

A stout barn
is the start
the newborn farm

You can live with the stock
but you can't live without

Many's the farmer
who blessed the floor
happy of the warmth
of fur and feather below



Machinery

The machinery starts
with a man's hand
on a hoe

The stuff that grows
by drill and rake
will provide the cash
to buy the tractor

Tractors break
fuel runs out
a man goes on



Machinery II

Steel, wood, rubber
grease, oil and leather

The growing season is short
what time is invested
in the long winter months
is taken back
spring to autumn

A bigger crop
a better chance
for next year



String

String
around hay
thrown over a beam
to hold a lamp

String to tie up a hose
belt the pants
yoke the pails

String too useful
to discard
no matter how cheap



String

String II

Nothing that goes in
ever comes out of a barn

There's always a peg
to hang a bit
a bob
a thingamajig

When you need it
you should never think
'I should have kept it'



A Stout Barn II

Home-cut poles
self-sawn planks
and a few nails

Good enough ladder
for a working man
Tested by use
certified by those
who use it
as safe



Rural Electrification II