

where the usually apathetic creatures come grumbling upon him as though he were a shovelful of corn. When, horror stricken and desperate, he finally scrambles over the wall around the pen, his ruddy face is bloody, scratched and scarred, and his big ears have been entirely gnawed away.

His eyes are full of mud and blood, but he can still see the green pastures, the heavy shade trees and the low stone walls of the valley. Even without his ears, he can still hear the excited grumble of the hogs growling muffled and dull, the nearby baying of cows and the occasional bleat of sheep as he runs toward the cottage. And even though he is desperately traumatized and afraid, he still believes in love, trust and hope.

For the rest of his days the big-eared man blames the ruddy-skinned woman for the boy's having climbed up into the tree; and she, in turn, blames her husband for having sent him to tend hogs at such a tender age. The boy sits mute and still with no ears and a scarred face.

Of course, all this has some moral or meaning, but damned if I can figure it out.

-- James Miller Robinson

Huntsville AL

GRANDFATHER

On the day you died,
we received
from Creative Playthings
a box of orange wooden letters
for your great granddaughter
Melanie Anne.
I thought of your defunct esophagus,
your failing heart,
your cataracts,
and your old mind,
and I wished I could spell out
an indestructible
orange message
for you.