

40 acres - by Derek Walcott

- to honor the Presidential election victory of Barack OBAMA

Out of the turmoil emerges one emblem, an engraving —

a young Negro at dawn in straw hat and overalls,

an emblem of impossible prophecy, a crowd

dividing like the furrow which a mule has ploughed,

parting for their president: a field of snow-flecked

cotton

forty acres wide, of crows with predictable omens

that the young ploughman ignores for his unforgotten

cotton-haired ancestors, while lined on one branch, is

a tense

court of bespectacled owls and, on the field's

receding rim —

a gesticulating scarecrow stamping with rage at him.

The small plough continues on this lined page

beyond the moaning ground, the lynching tree, the tornado's

black vengeance,

and the young ploughman feels the change in his veins,

heart, muscles, tendons,

till the land lies open like a flag as dawn's sure

light streaks the field and furrows wait for the sower.

Regarding the 40 acres promised to freed slaves of America: "The country did not give the Black man the forty acres and a mule as promised. But tonight, instead, they gave the Black man 50 states and the White House."