God knows it’s slow work, especially when March streams like a broken faucet, or gluttonous snows fall through February.

You batter the gates till you can’t stand it, then you try … Next thing you know, you’re axle deep in a dead furrow

or your rig sinks like a big green boat above some broken drain tile. You can bury yourself in any square foot that lies low.

But you can only gnaw the stall door so long. My dead father would curse the weather for days or weeks at a time, hovering inside the kitchen like a dry gray cloud, having changed the oil in every engine and greased each conceivable part,

waiting, waiting, good God, for better weather. And that, gentle reader, is why I left the goddamn farm.

But there were other days, magazine-cover, tractor-ad days, when the ground turned itself over, the way a woman unpeels her robe,
anxious to be loved. The very wind
smelled of apple flowers and diesel smoke,
and you believed you were born for a reason.