

## Follower

by Seamus Heaney

My father worked with a horse-plough,  
His shoulders globed like a full sail strung  
Between the shafts and the furrow.  
The horse strained at his clicking tongue.

5     An expert. He would set the wing  
      And fit the bright steel-pointed sock.  
      The sod rolled over without breaking.  
      At the headrig, with a single pluck

10    Of reins, the sweating team turned round  
      And back into the land. His eye  
      Narrowed and angled at the ground,  
      Mapping the furrow exactly.

15    I stumbled in his hob-nailed wake,  
      Fell sometimes on the polished sod;  
      Sometimes he rode me on his back  
      Dipping and rising to his plod.

20    I wanted to grow up and plough,  
      To close one eye, stiffen my arm.  
      All I ever did was follow  
      In his broad shadow round the farm.

24    I was a nuisance, tripping, falling,  
      Yapping always. But today  
      It is my father who keeps stumbling  
      Behind me, and will not go away.