**Real Work**

At the ranch

We shared a small cottage

Nestled in the back of a vineyard

Where old, lopsided crates

Leaned like weathered cowboys on a fence

There was little money

for anything but food,

stolen from the neighbor’s barn

Which made it taste better

Stray wild, chickens roasted in fatback

Her gnarled weathered hands

Handed me a rake

A 50 pound gunny sack, too

“I’ll pay you two dollars a bag,

Go rake the walnuts”.

Looking into the sea of trees,

It seemed impossible.

We were students,

It was summer,

We only lasted a day