

Top Surgery Poem

by Eli Shaw

Driving down south for the event itself,
I see a fresh-plowed field, turned into rows
and rows of empty soil. I know that a lot of

people see me the way they see this barren,
sculpted land. Think the scalpel which will
slice across my skin in two days' time is not

unlike the crude, colossal machine responsible
for tearing up all natural and beautiful things
that once replenished the earth. Or, even

worse, see my body like the worked-over farm
itself – being only in existence because of the
men who dredged it out of a terrible and precious

wilderness. Better never to have been at all. And
maybe I am like this pesticide-saturated plot of
land, something that will never exist independently

from human meddling. As I heard some transphobe
say on the internet once, *a permanent medical
patient. But* I have to wonder if the tender

to this land has ever stepped onto his open field,
in the early hours of the morning, and placed
with his bare hands a seed – no matter how

impractical the gesture. And in my car, another
engine polluting the food we eat, I can feel caked
organic matter under my fingernails, promise

sprouting through my palms. The very same hands
that will grip a hospital's ballpoint pen and sign
here, make of my body a field ripe for planting.