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Senior Level Entry
Category: Poetry
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Dust in Their Lungs

Anxious men hold their breath,
wringing dusty hats between
dry, calloused hands.
A breeze picks up;
shifts silently over windowsills
in the otherwise still August night.
But the air
that rolls through the windows
is heavier than normal...

In the houses,
children stir in dreamless sleep
and kick blankets aside in
momentary discomfort.
But just beyond their bedroom walls,
prairies sway in anticipation,
corn rustles in apprehension,
humming cicadas fall silent,
the breeze dies down.
and a single drop of water
falls to the dust.

It lands with a quiet plop,
but the vast silence of the
anticipating earth causes it to
echo for hours.
More drops follow, echo
and melt away.
Men exhale,
put on their hats and
whisper thanks to the skies above.