

## Michael T. Steffen

### The Miracle Worker in Work Clothes

With pearl hooks and buttons piecing the Oshkosh  
Overalls over the damp denim shirt  
Buttoned to the collar and the wrists,  
Sweating with reins gripped in calloused hands  
Guiding the wide-rump horses and the plow  
Across the fields in the warming sun  
With the creases of leather boots clumped in clay  
The miracle worker  
Has raised the dead at Saint Galen's  
While the family wept and praised the lord their god.  
Like earth stunning  
Winter back into spring, the miracle worker  
Tensed, a body of sweat and breath, breast borne open  
To the holy spirit  
With great concentration pushing, pushing  
The dead back into this life while men  
Looking on stood dumb and amazed  
Some of them fainting as the corpse  
Shivered squirming, spurting  
The blood of life onto the near assistants, then  
Gasped and wailed that other  
Worldly protest in the constricted  
Gagvoice of a summer insect  
Chirring, bawling, demonically  
Accusing the gathered for having summonsed it  
Back to this air.

*Go on home, the miracle worker  
Shouts at the men still looking on.  
The good book sayeth, 'The dead shall be raised'.  
I have these fields to plow this morning.*

**Michael T. Steffen** did his university studies in Literature and French at Belmont in Nashville, Tennessee. On a Rotary International Fellowship he received his MA in

Renaissance Studies from Sussex University in Brighton, England, and went on to live in France, writing, translating and teaching throughout the 1990s. He has had poetry published in *ACM (Another Chicago Magazine)*, *Ibbetson Street* and *Wilderness House Literary Review* and was the recipient for first prize in poetry at the 2007 Somerville News Writers Festival.