

**A Home Within the Chest**  
**By Ethan R. Sellers**

*Mechanical thunder rumbles up the hillside.  
Trucks carry foreign doctors to our village.  
Dust billows & lifts upwards, mingling with dirt & pollen  
I upturn in tending to my crops.*

*An ache has grown within my gums,  
a seed dropped by birds in a field it shouldn't be.  
It must be a bad tooth. I hear the foreign doctors  
can wrest the weed from my mouth.*

*I begin the journey towards our clinic-church,  
but grow quickly air-starved  
& must stop to rediscover the wind within my lungs.  
This is time- crops, birds, farmers, & foreign doctors all age-*

*& this has been my year of aging.  
Air washes in & out my chest like well-worn burlap  
leaking grain- so it goes with old things like me.  
The foreign doctors beg to differ.*

*I try to show the rotten tooth, but they point at my heaving chest,  
skin sagging from thinning bones,  
& wonder at ways to turn back time. With a stethoscope  
they listen to the drum of my heart,*

*then listen again,  
bright eyes narrowed in concentration.  
They speak in hushed tones,  
nodding, considering, & finally tell me*

*my heart is a home. It has four rooms. Blood moves  
through these rooms & the doorways of my heart,  
until it exits to spread like water  
across the fields & hills of my body.*

*But my home has grown old, its hinges rusted,  
& blood struggles to open its doorways.  
I need a replacement, fresh hinges no longer stiffened by age,  
or the land of my body may fall into its final rest.*

*The foreign doctors call this an aortic valve.  
It will take this year's harvest & many more to buy.  
They ask if I have family. "A son," I tell them,  
but I wonder about his wife & daughter;*

*the homes within their chests  
filled with vibrant blood, newly oiled hinges,  
& dreams of a world where they no longer work  
our family fields but cultivate the furrows of the mind.*

*The foreign doctors may know much of medicine,  
but understand little of farming, the churn of seasons,  
& the dreams which whisper  
through the rooms of my granddaughter's heart.*