

# Queens of Fields

*Alex Everett*

It will burn.

A wooden house will soon sit in a field of wheat. The constant spring breeze ripples and waves through the stalks, a living ocean of gold. Wind tears up the pollen and spreads it as far as the field wants to spread. It is infinite, nothing but sheaths of potential stretching for miles and miles until the horizon is filled to the brim. The fragrance of soil wafts through the yellowed air. It is flat, untainted by the smallest mound of earth. Leaves from unknown and unseen trees skirt across the field's floor.

The noon sun rests in a lake of constantly shifting prismatic clouds. Skies year-round change into all colors in the spectrum, from red to blue to green. The change is almost always slow, but there are occasions where it contorts so fast as to escape human perception. It curls and twists with time and space. It hides the stars, the gods, portraits them just right. Great watchful beasts swim through the air, moving with the earth beneath them. They reach towards the field with long, slim fingers, though never able to touch the ground. A path appears to be torn through the sky, leading to some distant future, a certain past.

The house is being built.

First comes the foundation, huge blocks of stone half-buried in the soft, pliable ground. There is no one working on it, no one around long enough to make a difference. Pillars of wood rise from their nailed positions, the frame slowly being brought to reality. Floors, walls, ceilings, doors, and windows reveal themselves suddenly and with no fanfare to be heard. Extensions protrude from the main form: a small room on the first level, a roof over the front porch, a patio in the back, a balcony from the second story. The structure is finished, stark to the elements. White is painted on the outer walls with unseen hands, the edges of windows, doors, and trims colored with a bright matte red.

The house is built.

It stands empty for a time, but soon come the first residents. Lights in the house turn on, illuminating the occasional night. The rooms fill themselves with furniture and pictures. Children play in the wheat, their faces morphing into new beings as time passes, as the skies change. Parents watch from the windows, though they have no reason to feel fear. The field is safety. The field is what they know. The children grow into their parents as their parents grow into new buds of grass. All becomes old. The paint flakes off the house before being turned into new bright colors. New children, the same children, play in the field. For seconds of millenia, the children explore their unchanging surroundings, always finding the identical new things. The beasts of the sky keep their attention on them, making sure they never stray too far from the house, the watchful eyes of infant guardians.

The house is a home.

There are less and less children. The faces in the windows become ancient and stationary. The paint ages with them, no longer being routinely replaced. The faces of the only residents become older, paler, worn. It comes to be that there are no more children. They slowly disappear

until only one is left. A single man stands at the door, watching the wheat twist and turn in the breeze. As he ages, figure growing smaller, his eyes lose their sparkle. He closes the door and the home is empty.

The home is empty.

Time flees quickly, taking the house with it a piece at a time. The field surrounding grows further and further in, paths shaped by children disappearing. Stalks break through the cracks in the foundation, some formation of a residency in the home. The extension over the front door tilts to the right, threatening to turn over. Wood all over the home warp and coil into crooked fingers. Glass fractures. Some beams on the roof tear free in particularly bad wind, revealing a now barren attic.

In a moment of clear weather, one of the beasts reached a finger down onto the home. A bolt of lightning snaked its way inside, striking the foundation with all its might. No one was there to hear the thunder, strong enough to shake the home. No one was there to feel the electricity in the atmosphere of that once-was home, to smell the ozone that heated the air in the kitchen and living room. No one was around to see the fire.

It burns.

It starts slowly. A spark in the dining room, the center of the home, sits there for a moment, seemingly content with its spot. The air burns, but enough of a breeze keeps it small. It watches the home around it, looking for anything particularly interesting. When it sees, it reaches out little tendrils of flame to investigate. The spark is curious at first, but soon it becomes greedy. More and more arms reach out, so that the spark becomes a bit bigger, and then a bit bigger, and then a bit bigger. The entire floor of the dining room is burning, but this does not satiate the flame. It climbs up the walls, dashes through the doorways, grabbing anything it can to fuel its hunger. The timbers of the ceiling crumble into fine ash and chunks of charcoal, spreading the fire and its widespread body upstairs. The heat shatters the glass on the windows, sending shards far into the uncaring field of wheat.

It burns.

Nothing classically sentient watches as the home becomes a house becomes a heap of burning wood. The smoke twists and swirls in the wind, taking a twilight sky into the depths of night. The fire lights up the field in a wavering circle of hundreds of feet in diameter, but the blaze never spreads beyond the home become house become nothing. The wheat is an impassive observer, the multicolored beasts in the sky mourning in their own celestial way.

It burns to the ground.

There is nothing left. As time progresses in its normal fashion, the ash blows away, being used as sparse fertilizer in different miles of the same field. Water and air break apart the foundation into manageable sections. Wheat and grass make their way through the tough ground, sprouting back to their rightful throne in place of the home become a house become nothing.

It will burn.

Author Bio:

Alex Everett is a third-year at Dixie State University. He studies physics and computer science, and has been published in *Dark Moon Digest* and *Southern Quill*.