

Bessie Smith in Yorkshire - Adrian Mitchell

As I looked over the billowing West Riding
A giant golden tractor tumbled over the horizon
The grass grew blue and the limestone changed to meat
For Bessie Smith was bumping in the driver's seat.

Threw myself down on the fertilised ground and cried:
'When I was a foetus I loved you, and I love you now you've died.'
She was bleeding beauty from her wounds in the Lands of Wrong
But she kept on travelling, spent all her breathing on song.

I was malleted into the earth as tight as a gate-post
She carried so much life I felt like the ghost of a ghost
She's the river that runs straight uphill
Hers is the voice brings my brain to a standstill

Black tracking wheels
Rolling round the planet
Seeds of the blues
Bust through the concrete

My pale feet fumble along
The footpaths of her midnight empire.

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