

SIDE A

Miles Could you tell me about the milking operation?

Morgan Cows are milked twice a day, milk goes to the dairy. Dairy gives us money.

Miles Okay, but what's it like? Do the cows mind being milked continually?

Morgan Do they mind?

Miles Yeah, well, you know, how does a cow feel about getting interfered with twice a day?

Morgan How does the cow feel. About getting milked.

Miles Yeah. Do they find it traumatic at all? All the, you know, touching?

Morgan Well, even though you're from the city, you must know that your cow is the laziest of God's creatures.

Miles Right.

Morgan And I'm sure you realize that we slaughter some of the cows we got. For eatin'.

Miles Right.

Morgan 'Bout one a week we slaughter. Keeps the deep freeze full. Maybe you can help with the next one. Well, the way we choose which cow to kill for meat is related to their milk output. Lowest producer gets the axe. The cows know this, and they produce as much milk as they can, to keep from, you know, being chosen.

Miles I see.

Morgan Otherwise the dang things would stand around all day.

Miles Really.

Morgan Here's what I suggest you do. Go into the barn, sit down with the cows. At first they'll seem real casual. But just watch them for a while and before long, you'll see just how much pressure they're labouring under. They're all tense as cats

Miles Right. Okay! Thanks. *(rises to go to the barn)* Morgan? I'm sorry I hit you with the tractor.

Morgan Think nothing of it. Hardly a day goes by on most farms when something or somebody doesn't get run over. I expect you'll find that out first hand.

(Hours later, Miles is back from the barn. Morgan has offered him a beef sandwich.)

Miles How's the hand feeling?

Morgan Numb.

Miles Oh my God...

Morgan Well, at least the throbbing's stopped. If it's not right in a week or so, I'll get it removed.

Miles You'll ...?

Morgan Government'll pay for a hook or something. How'er things in the barn?

Miles Uhh, well, I sat there for a long time, watching your cows. One of them, a brown one ---

Morgan Which brown one?

Miles Uh ...

Morgan Bow-legged brown one or the brown one that smells like a wet sweater?

Miles The bow-legged one. I guess.

Morgan Daisy.

Miles She kept trying to turn around to look at me. I think she thought I was coming to choose the next one to get, you know. She looked me in the eye, she, Daisy, has these eyes that are like brown tennis balls. She stared and stared right at me. For a long time. It felt like we ... exchanged something. Daisy's not ... next, is she?

Morgan 'Fraid so. (*He gives Miles a sandwich.*)

Miles Jeez. (*eating*) You said this was beef? Tastes like ham.

Morgan That's because we feed the pigs to the cows.

Miles Really?

Morgan Well, not the whole pig.

Miles (*takes out a notebook*) What's it like, being around death and rebirth all the time? To grow things and kill things for a living, year in and year out? You've been here how long?

Morgan We bought the place in '42.

Miles Must be ... difficult. I mean, you grow wheat and corn out of the dirt, out of literally nothing, then you cut it down and sell it. You raise animals, feed them, and house them for years, name them; and then you kill them and eat them.

Morgan Uh huh.

Miles What is that like? How does it make you feel?

Morgan Miles, it's an emotional rollercoaster.