

Sarah's Quilting

Her fingers nimble and knotted
from years of farming, deftly run
stitches through wools and cottons
forming rows in her patchwork
like the streams that irrigate
her land. She orders her family's
torn, faded clothes turning them
into her loaves and fishes.

The simplicity of squares comfort
her, map her day's work: rows
of beans sewn to rows of corn,
sewn to rows of carrots and lettuce.
Nine patches of muslin to nine patches
of gingham, straight lines of stitching
a meditative motion. She sews log
cabins, goose tracks and bear's paw.

Her day's gratitude and sorrows sluice
down her arm into her needle. *Will Thomas
earn enough to support his growing family?
Will Mary and Ben be able to conceive?*
Sometimes her stitches are tight and tufted
with airy eiderdown; sometimes large and
gapped as her heavy heart. But always at
her quilt's center—a red square for her
burning hearth—the home that was hers
after fifteen years of construction. The home
she'll live in until she is 102-years-old.

Donna Reis