



Greg German was born and raised near Glen Elder, in north central Kansas, where he farmed with his family for many years. He is a two-time graduate of Kansas State University and holds a B.A. degree in English/Creative writing and a B.S. in Education. He also holds an AS degree in Agriculture from Cloud County Community College. After living overseas on the Caribbean island of Dominica for a number of years, he currently lives in Kansas City, Kansas, with his wife, Regina. They have one son, Alden.

A poet and essayist, Mr. German has been published in over 50 academic literary journals across the U.S. His publications included: *Poet Lore*, *Kansas Quarterly*, *Negative Capability*, *Rattle*, *WIND*, *Mid-America Review*, *Midwest Quarterly Review*, *Flint Hills Review*, *Hawaii Review*, *Alaska Quarterly*. Samples of his "harvest" themed poems were placed in the Kansas Historical Archives, in Topeka, KS. His essay, *Far Away Places*, won Emporia State University's *Flint Hill's Review*, first annual non-fiction essay contest, in 2000. More of his writing can be viewed at www.limestone9.com

Mr. German is the sole proprietor of [Limestone9 Consulting](#) which provides website design and development, needs assessment, educational training & consulting, free-lance writing, photography and more. Previously, he also taught English at Junction City, Kansas, high school for a number of years as well as college level writing classes and workshops.

Greg was especially privileged to be the Special Project Coordinator for Jonathan Holden during his tenure as Kansas' first Poet Laureate during which time he produced, directed and hosted *Shop Talk* a television program featuring the Laureate.

Sow 32 In Stall #9

Ten fresh pigs, their tails
pumping with pleasure, bubble
along her milk filled tappers.
But something deep inside her
is stuck. Too long
since her last delivery
she is tangled in contraction.
Too weak to push, the wave
breaks, and drains away.
I am ready for this
to be over. At three in the morning
I roll up my sleeve
and let her oven heat
wrap around my arm. My hand
soaks through the dark. Elbow
deep, I find the fourth brother,
and by his gumdrop-slick hoof, pull
the last pig home.

Originally Published in *Poet Lore*
--1986, V.81, #3

Seasoning

Fall blew under the porch
late, and it was mid-November
before elm leaves chatting
in the front yard chased
themselves into that place
where only the dog ventured.
In the garden, bony tomato
and cucumber vines posed
limp. Stiff stems still clung
to apples too mushy to throw.
The flies had vanished.
Cows brought in, turned out
to milo stubs, licked up dry-sweet
stalks and juicy heads missed
by anxious combines. Each morning
we stretched last year's cramps
from worn coats, and exercised
new gloves on bucket handles;
sows bumped from beds furrowed
in straw. Spiced, fully cooked
and cooling, the air cured
into winter.

Originally Published in *Negative Capability*
-- 1987 V.7, #3



Greg German

Distinguished Kansas Poet

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A Tired Farmer Goes To Town

--Fifth day, wheat harvest--

A locally scattered thundershower
comes through on a full stoked
locomotive wind and slams
past his house. He gets out of bed
to watch and stands there
in the storm's confused
reflection, more a shadow
than a man. Raindrops,
big as boots,
kick at the windows.
Then it's over.
The farmer can't sleep.
At first light
he gets in his pick-up
and goes to look at his land.
The sun rides up
on a clear sky, a shiny spot
on a porcelain plate.
An eye-batting breeze
flirts with the damp
flour scent of a delayed
harvest. At the 5-mile corner
the farmer knows that he has drawn
out of a full-house.
He looks at his field
like it was never there.
When hail comes, size don't
matter. Five minutes
of the pea-sized stuff
is all it takes
to iron a wheat field
flat. He is tired
and considers never going home.
At the restaurant, some men
are not tired at all. Conversation
spills across the contour
of damage. To stop the erosion,
they pull their best jokes
out of their pockets and plant them
between cups of coffee. Before noon
the farmer antes and goes back
into his country. He greases his combine
and enjoys the dust.

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-- 1993 V.24, #4

A Brave Farmer Goes To The Bank

--farmer--/farm r/n 1: a person
who pays a fixed sum for some privilege
or source of income 2: a person who cultivates land
or crops or raises livestock 3: YOKEL, Bumpkin
Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1981

He parks right out front
where his neighbor's mud
has hardened
onto the asphalt,
and walks
straight to the bank's thick glass
door. The door is placed
to reflect everyone's image,
and the farmer sees his T-shirt
is untucked. The door is easy
to open. It shouldn't matter.
The banker is his friend,
and behind a plowshare-styled smile
that can't break crust,
he welcomes the farmer
with interest. They both fake it.
A mystic, the banker pulls
his pile of paper, from somewhere,
and begins to read the future.
The farmer is afraid,
and imagines himself swallowed
by the chair that holds him.
He is paying for his life
with his life. He leaves
the building with the mystic's fee
printed on pink, and feels the stiffness
of the concrete
move into his knees,
proving that he is not ageless.

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