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To Build A Home

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FRANCESCA

There's a boat that leaves from Napoli
Ev'ry Thursday in the morning.
And a nervous bride can share a bed
with her soldier from the States.
For a week, the ocean carries them
Over lost and churning water.
And they land in New York Harbor,
Then to Pennsylvania Station,
Where they board a train that slices like a scythe
through the fields of America.

This is Albany. This is Buffalo.
This is Cleveland. This is South Bend.
This is Chicago. This is Osceola Station.
Where a truck will take them deeper into Iowa.
To Winterset.
And three hundred Acres waiting to be tamed.

And blade of grass, by blade of grass,
And ear of corn, by ear of corn,
And bale of hay, by day by day,
they build themselves a home.
And day by day, and year by year,
from boy to man, from calf to steer,
What's lost from there may not grow here,
but comes the sun,
Look what they've done:
They've built themselves a home.

At twenty-one, a girl begins
to grasp the world and how it spins.
She grabs a box of safety pins
and builds herself a home.
And home is safe, and home is fair,
The porch, the bath, the kitchen chair.
The sharp and unfamiliar air
that blow by blow she comes to know
to build herself a home.

With a son.
And a daughter.
And a million miles between the fires she used to set,
the hearts she used to break,
the lies she used to tell,
and the woman she grew up to be.

I learn to speak, I learn to sew,
I learn to let the longing go,
The tractor wheel, a foot of snow,
I build myself a home.
I change my words, I change my name,
The fields go dry.
The horse goes lame.
The county fair, the football game,
For eighteen years, it stays the same,
For eighteen years, I'm proud I came
And built myself a home.