

Human Chain

for Terence Brown

Seeing the bags of meal passed hand to hand
In close-up by the aid workers, and soldiers
Firing over the mob, I was braced again
With a grip on two sack corners,
Two packed wads of grain I'd worked to lugs
To give me purchase, ready for the heave –
The eye-to-eye, one-two, one-two upswing
On to the trailer, then the stoop and drag and drain
Of the next lift. Nothing surpassed
That quick unburdening, backbreak's truest payback,
A letting go which will not come again.
Or it will, once. And for all.

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