

January 2009

Forgiveness, Arkansas 1895

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Recommended Citation

De Dominic, Nik (2009) "Forgiveness, Arkansas 1895," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 8: Iss. 2, Article 13.

Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol8/iss2/13>

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De Dominic: Forgiveness, Arkansas 1895

FORGIVENESS, ARKANSAS 1895

Nik De Dominic

A dusty fort, gallows.

The rain kicks up
the worms to surface,
rolling in on themselves, the hot
smell of horse urine, dust.

Maledon takes a thumbnail
to remove the clay from his boot's
eyelet. If only it hadn't rained.
The man next to me asks,

why them worms come up
with rains? They would
drown in their holes, shitbird.
Sometimes, things are this simple –

there are six of us. The worms do
not want to drown. This is undeniable.
A single lever. Death. *Now Maledon's
boys are in the woods, stringing*

*up Delilah's girl. When they come to
trial, he'll say, this is what boys do,
string up gourds from the garden
on the laundry line. The little woman hates*

that—bruised fruit is only good for stews.