

Birthright

Jacob stole his birthright,
being clever and tricky
and gets the bad rap on
account of greed,
but what about the sin of Esau
who *sold* his birthright for a single
bowl of soup?

Sure, at the time
it seemed reasonable
Esau seeing nothing but his hunger
—gut wrenching hunger
but emptiness doesn't always
render us clear of sight—
sometimes it shapes desperate eyes and
snatching hands.

I imagine Esau there at table,
hunger sated, realizing now
the *emptiness* of the bowl
the *emptiness*—
what he'd given up...

or maybe not,
maybe Esau simply belched
and excused himself, because
satiation doesn't always
render us mindful of
consequence.

Keep brother stuffed;
he'll never know he's being taken.

And sometimes my own hunger
is the voice I hear telling me to short-sell
for a few immediate spoonfuls...

I have seen the children
of stolen birthrights,
stolen, in the end, by their feeders--
by those who have something
to sell them.... and something to gain
from the selling.

And I'm a *teacher*

for Heaven's sake,
with a bowl of soup
and some hungry students
willing to eat
what I'm dishing up--
indiscriminately--
filling the pits of swollen bellies
with what's been mandated with what
the research says will surely fill them.

And I could spend days feeding
them data soup chock-full of
standards
in a warm broth of best practice
and we could raise the bar
make AYP
incentivize the path
till no one's left behind.

But what if something has been
squandered while I was ladling--
what if they've traded
some blood-right,
some unique mark...

What if we *educators*
have helped them trade
a birthright
for a bowl of
compliance soup?