

Acreage

“his parents boarded him at school in town, / slaving to free him from the stony fields, / the meagre acreage that bore them down.”

An area of land, typically used for agricultural purposes, but not necessarily measured in acres.

Barren

“they watched him picking up the slender scroll, / his passport from the years of brutal toil / and lonely patience in a barren hole.”

(of land) too poor to produce much or any vegetation.

Board

“his parents boarded him at school in town, / slaving to free him from the stony fields, / the meagre acreage that bore them down.”

(Of a student) to be supplied with food and lodging at school during a semester in return for money.

Bore

“his parents boarded him at school in town, / slaving to free him from the stony fields, / the meagre acreage that bore them down.”

To make (a hole) in something by drilling with a cutting instrument.

Hew

“his axe-hewn hands upon the paper bills / aching with empty strength and throttled rage.”

To make, shape, smooth, etc., with cutting blows of a cutting instrument.

Marvel

“When he went in the Bank their cups ran over. / They marvelled how he wore a milk-white shirt / work days and jeans on Sundays.”

To feel great surprise, wonder, or admiration.

Meagre

“his parents boarded him at school in town, / slaving to free him from the stony fields, / the meagre acreage that bore them down.”

Not enough in quality or amount.

Passport

“They blushed with pride when, at his graduation, / they watched him picking up the slender scroll, / his passport from the years of brutal toil”

An official document issued by a government, certifying the holder's identity and citizenship and entitling them to travel under its protection to and from foreign countries.

Scroll

“They blushed with pride when, at his graduation, / they watched him picking up the slender scroll, / his passport from the years of brutal toil”

A roll of parchment, paper, or other material, especially one with writing on it.

Strew

“They marvelled how he wore a milk-white shirt / work days and jeans on Sundays. He was saved / from their thistle-strewn farm and its red dirt.”

Be scattered or spread untidily over (a surface or area).

Teller

“And he said nothing. Hard and serious / like a young bear inside his teller's cage,”

A person employed to deal with customers' transactions in a bank.

Thistle

“They marvelled how he wore a milk-white shirt / work days and jeans on Sundays. He was saved / from their thistle-strewn farm and its red dirt.”

A wild plant that has sharp points on its leaves and purple, yellow, or white flowers.

Throttle

“his axe-hewn hands upon the paper bills / aching with empty strength and throttled rage.”

Attack or kill (someone) by choking or strangling them.

Toil

“They blushed with pride when, at his graduation, / they watched him picking up the slender scroll, / his passport from the years of brutal toil”

To work very hard for a long time.