

Greg Stidham

Mississippi August

Kudzu-choked pines line
Mississippi highways, while
cotton plants droop
for lack of water these scorched
late August afternoons. And
a surprise wee-hour cloudburst only
whets the thirst
of crops' roots dying dry.
Farmers feel a frenzy
from dollars needed
being baked from their soil,
their hardened souls asking
one more time, *why?*

Greg Stidham is a retired pediatric intensivist (ICU physician) currently living in Kingston, Ontario, with his wife Pam and the last survivor of an ever-evolving pack of rescue dogs. Greg's passion for medicine has yielded in retirement to his other lifelong passions—literature and creative writing. He has published numerous poems in a variety of literary journals, several short stories, a memoir *Blessings and Sudden Intimacies*, (PathBinder Publishers, 2021) and a poetry chapbook *Doctoring in Nicaragua* (Finishing Line Press, 2021).