

JACKIE MCCLURE

Having Been Sown

Thousands of years
before the Christian era,
having been
sown in the fall,
and living through
the winter,
having been
sown in the spring,
inner bran coats—
so rich
in mineral matter—
arose

and history tells
water, salt and
a ferment intimately
connected with them
will make the perfect food—
wheat bread
as high as
that of our friends across the water.

It seems unnecessary
and wrong
to find poor bread
on the table. Would
that our standard
might be
raised.

ABOUT THE POEM

“Having Been Sown” was created from *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book* by Fannie Merritt Farmer (1928 edition). About the poem and the process of composing it, Jackie McClure writes:

The flyleaf of the stained and battered book is inscribed with the names of three generations of family women and includes the penciled recipes for “Biscuits every morning for 3,” “Peanut Butter Muffins,” and “Pineapple Minute Tapioca.” This volume has traversed the United States from coast to coast for nearly one hundred years with our maternal line. Seeking a publication from 1928 or older, I chose the compelling opening pages of the chapter on “Bread and Bread Making.” The words are those of Fannie Merritt Farmer; I just re-arranged them, musing on a few of the many complexities of current relations we now have with wheat, given what we’ve done to it.

