



Kentucky Harvest

Things don't change much in western Kentucky, even after decades. But in October 2006, when I returned to my native state with Yoshi in tow, I was startled to see a ubiquitous crop that I didn't recognize. We stopped, plucked a pod and chewed the little beans inside. Ah, soybeans, which in one form or another constitute much of Yoshi's diet. *Tofu*, soy sauce, *miso* soup, etc. The photo above was taken a few miles outside the tiny village of Beech Grove, which my fingers insist on typing as "Beach Grove" until my brain takes over and makes the correction to "Beech," the tree, not those far-away expanses of seacoast sand. I was born nearly seventy-five years ago in the hills overlooking

Beech Grove. As Yoshi and I drove past one soybean field after another, we had a lively discussion about the color of this Kentucky crop nearing harvest. It depended on the height of the sun and the clarity of the skies. In my mid-afternoon, clear-sky photo, the soybeans look light brown. But at dusk, or under cloudy skies, they become a beautifully delicate purple, what might be called mauve. I like the old barn here. Now that's something that hasn't changed at all. The barns are everywhere, often leaning this way or that, waiting to be rebuilt for another fifty years.

JACKSON SELLERS, November 2006

Tobacco

We drove through portions of Missouri, Arkansas and Tennessee, but it wasn't until we got into Kentucky that, upon entering a restaurant, we heard the welcome words "Smoking or non-smoking?" Just off a country road leading from Beech Grove to little Green River, a tributary of the mighty Ohio River, I stopped to take a whiff of tobacco plants hanging and curing, from top to bottom, in one of those old leaning barns. The tobacco hangs upside down to let the sap seep into the leaves.

