

Storyteller

by Richard Taylor

Though humor was his medicine, his poultice for the wounds of war & family loss, a way to whistle off his native sadness, most it was his instrument, his arsenal to win a point of law or policy. The skunk in the henhouse, sausage and the bulldog, his new hat stolen at the dance were staples of his rhetoric, metaphors by which he reasoned & drove that reasoning home. Those pushing hard for patronage he dismissed as “too many pigs for the tits.” Douglass’s pleading for popular sovereignty he likened to a “thin soup” made by boiling the shadow of a pigeon that had starved to death. Laughter oiled his logic.