



from Hairst : Susan Tichy

*n* [O.Sc. *hervist*, *hayrst*] (14c) **1**:  
harvest **2**: autumn **3**: (19c) a  
harvest job, *esp* **tak a hairst**  
engage oneself as a harvest  
labourer; (20c) **hae a day**  
**in hairst wi someone** owe  
someone a favor, have a score  
to settle

For/to/because of Alexander Magruder  
b. Perthshire, Scotland 1610  
transported 1652  
d. Maryland 1677

1677:

Alexander dead

Came Samuel Taylor and Ninian Beall  
overseers named in the Last Will and etc.  
requesting to have the same proved  
by oathes of witnesses thereunto  
that widow of the deceased  
*who is therin named executrix*  
with the orphans of the etc.  
was lately dead  
to have administration to them committed  
of all and singular the goods  
chattels and debts  
two others appraisers and the said Jowles  
[price of liquor set by the county]  
Ninian Beall, Lieutenant of Militia  
who served as representative

in dealings with the Indians  
[we must not pass judgment upon a Law  
according to one line  
nor upon the large, extending bowels of America  
dwelling pleasantly on the shores of Chesapeake]  
had once in his house four score of venisons  
[plain bread rather was courted than desired]  
and for long service with Indians  
rewarded in old age...

but I digress  
*Elizabeth*  
said widdow and executrix  
came in good health three months along  
and shewed that shee the said Elizabeth  
[estimates listed in tabular form]  
being of sounde and disposing mind  
that Ninian Beall  
that Samuel Taylor  
[let us flay and dress their several hides]  
with letters testamentary  
of said orphans, choir master  
full survey of goods and chattels  
[will annexed to the glossary]  
Elizabeth, the last wife  
*retoured his heir*  
again

[heroick vigor that dwells in some kinds of beaste  
I don't know why don't ask me]

14  
14  
1  
14  
14  
14  
14  
O miserable tongue, don't lie. Land for tobacco, for corn, for fallow. Fifty acres per hand, to make it pay. Land for investment, land for landing. *Believe assuredly & inherit.* Timber and grazing and deer and geese. Three men to turn ten

acres, the lethal climate. *Prepared for the Elect Chosen*. Land on both sides of the river. Warehouses. Docks. Two families, six children, to provide for: *that noe Contest may arise: codicil, made in extremis*, specifying the rights of the older three children, the younger three, survivors. Who to live where till the land is clear. What age to enter into. Land without labor: worth less than a good cow. *Witness my hand and seale this day, and first being sorrie for my sins*. Uneven blackness of bad ink, unmended pen: this *Kingdom prepared on coarse parchment, texture of a homespun cloth. The figure of a small man apparently in the act of jumping. The figure of a small man, misplaced as some maintain. The figure of a small man, the very place where he was hurried. Rough-page-much-folded-red-wax-seal. Archival odor of great care. The figure of a small man, grown into a large one.*

2 feather beds 4 blankets 2 pillows  
all old 2 pr candlesticks 1 table 1  
cupboard 2 warming pans clothes  
cupboard coat-hang 2 joynt stools  
wood chairs

3 gunns 1 gridiron 6 old spoons 1  
pr fire irons w/ 1 small pr [illegible]  
12 yards lining 4 of silks 2 browne  
thread 13 yards mixt searge long  
looking glass 1 desk 1 sealskin  
trunk all old

canoo with lock and chain 150 lb 1  
man negro named Sambo 5000 lb  
John Land 4 years to serve 2000  
lb Tho Jonas 6 years to serve  
2000 lb Elinor Murphy 7 years to  
serve 2000 lb Ann Johnson 1 year  
to serve 400

1 cart 1 cart saddle 4 iron pots  
1 old 1 iron-bound case w/ 10  
bottles 4 black-handed knives nails  
3 bibles small books old 1 copper  
pot tinn candlesticks ah what does  
it matter debt on bill debt by  
account

Maryland County Calvert Patuxon  
The Inventory of the goods and  
chattels of the late deceased

Alex: Magruder the 14 day  
September 1677 a Totall Summ  
48,776, with debt 1,148

5 bulls 10 heifers 16 cows 9  
w/ calves 2 changes of coat &  
britches (but many shoos) table  
cloath & clothes of callago hose  
of leather lambes 2 doz coarse  
napkins no pipe

2000 lbs each, his servants. John Lande, a witness to his  
will: approximate value of a mare and colt. Sambo: from the  
price, a man in his prime. Most valuable property. Of *he that  
aye had livit fre*. Or not.

black man in a wool glengarry  
eye contact  
at the far edge of dalliance

16  
16  
16  
16  
16  
16  
16  
16  
16

embarrassed merely to pronounce  
that Alexander's pen  
that mine

a capture and  
it turns and shows its teeth

## 2

Something my mother told me: Ninian Beall, another Scotsman captured by Cromwell, exported like so much wheat to feed the appetite of the colonies. His sons and daughters married Magruders, became Magruders, his story now interlaced with theirs. Speaker of Indian languages, lieutenant of *a most thorough system of ranging*, authorized, by his Lordship's special command, to press a man and horse to speed intelligence. *For there were long the isolated murder expected of savage natures*, the occasional spree or tuilzie, the need to know the mood of the Indians during conflicts inglorious. Alexander's friend for his twenty-four years of inhabiting: Ninian Beall, with Samuel Taylor, went to the Testamentary Court and swore that Elizabeth, like her husband, was dead. Later a Burgess, later a boulder dragged into the Cathedral Close, to hold his name in the rain in perpetuity. A man of Signall Services, Laborious Endeavours, large land holdings. Rewarded in old age by the State Assembly, *for long converse with the Indians*: gift of three *serviceable* Negroes.

o ryvir mee delyverit  
*a bataill brought on bordour hard by us*  
*has faire ourgilt oure speche*

A serving wench or conjurer  
One man-negro named

*that in heil was and gladness*

straddled by this doolie dream

Something she never told me: fourteen slaves conspired to poison his grandson, John—husband of Alexander's granddaughter, Verlinda. Just one, *Beall's Bess*, convicted, sentenced to hang. In inventory of the goods and chattels: slave whip, lead bar in the handle. *And by the extremity of the correction should chance to die.* Then not accopted felony, but a misjudged destruction of property. Or, try a tale like this: one slave (unnamed), killed by Indians (unnamed). The master (named) awarded sixty buckskins by the court. He had to collect from Piscataways. Who could not pay. He accepted land in the reservation for the life of an African man, fourteen yards of Broad Cloath and some beads. A simple three-way trafficke in *Remove*.

North and by West two hundred and forty perches  
to a bounded oak of a parcel of Land

said alienacion shall be void  
*alike true to nature and history*  
in isle of caution drifting face  
fidelitie of the human beaste

*No greater gift than a negro*

Ay, and a gift in good time: indentured servants were so scarce even unmarried women worked out their term. Alexander had five sons, a daughter: all needed labor. Rolling depressions for forty years, price down and shipping sometimes not at all. Their only recourse was more tobacco, each man to produce more plants, more pounds, more *God knows what they thought of it.* Not one document records an attitude. For that egalitarian frontier of early death. For

this new wedding, *weill wers than death*. This black solucioun,  
disputacioun, immortality of *human beast*.

Cattle and treasure the same word

in animal light of the tallow candles  
a bedtime genealogy  
ink smeared by a careful hand

Come tell me what they call ye

proud in his carriage, speaks little English  
*his wool is commonly combed back and tied*  
with remarkable good and White teeth  
*born in England and bred a farmer*  
born in Antigua, straight limbed  
and when drunk stammers in his speech

Now yawning over the manuscript  
yellow stain the color of a turtle's back

Whoever pursued what did not run  
if measured by the pine trees

*I were climbing a tree that were too high for me*  
old-field pine on poorer soil      fierceness of a rainstorm

sudden ambush      elaborate form  
imbedded in *principio*

For those who could read, an underpinning (silk stitched to the osnabrig): a neo-Platonic taxonomy of Angelicall, Rationall, Brutall. But this was the dawn of Enlightenment, so have the latest: Sir William Petty's *The Scale of Creatures*. Mankind no longer a perfect whole, standing alone unassailable between Angel and Animal: an ambiguous place for the Savage,



now, in the universal scheme. *Subsistence drawn from the forest, or well-tempered but disposed to Idleness.* Call it an ethnological breakthrough. In Maryland, 1664: *shall serve Durante vita: call it Law.*

All endit was my innocence  
*But throw me my irons, lad, for they cost me dear*

