

GEORGE LOONEY

Flat Stones

The dead are quiet tonight under
the fields behind the barns. All
the animal graves our children marked
with flat stones lie still,
new grass growing over loose soil
under the moon. The dead are forgotten
tonight in the leaves blowing across
our back porch. In the glass
you pour for me there are deaths
in foreign soil, but tonight
it's simply wine. Our sleep is not
disturbed by the occasional braying
or whining of some animal that must
be far away. The dead are quiet tonight
in the fields behind the barn.

Missing

In the center of Ohio is a field
covered in white with a single line
of four-toed prints almost hidden
in new snow and a hill in the center.
And in a three-street farming town
in a gray-panelled house
a woman bends over broken glass
on the kitchen floor, her hands
careful of the sharp edges,
using a vacuum for the pieces
she'd never see. In the livingroom
a small boy huddles in the dark,
tears drying on his face.
He watches snow fall out the window,
pulls at the bone-white buttons
of his shirt, hides in the fold
of his pocket one red-stained fragment,
held tight as though it might
disappear. He listens to the purr
of the sweeper, closes his eyes
and sleeps as the fields
surrounding the town get deeper.
In one, a hill gets larger
as small four-toed prints disappear.
Snow continues to fall out the windows.