

## EDWARD LENSE

### *Evening in Parma, Ohio*

The plastic flamingoes are sleeping in stately poses.  
The children running in circles on the lawns  
pause, stare at each other gravely, half asleep.  
In their dark garages the cars are settling down  
and placidly ticking away their heat.  
Ice is growing like new skin over the swimming pools.  
Shadows slip between the houses, silence  
follows them, walks like a man alone in the street.  
Yellow windows light and go out in a slow rhythm;  
they would look, from a distance, like a swarm of fireflies  
if they ever moved.

### *The Ohio Soil*

My feet sink, slightly, into the soil.  
Wild grass brushes my shoulders. White seeds  
fall all around me to the ground  
and into the ground, toward the dead soils  
past the tips of roots, the beaches and muddy bottoms  
of an ocean. It is still there, buried  
with its fish, crabs, snails, and the weeds  
fish nudged through, twisting. Dead eyes  
watch each other where the weeds grew.

Shells lie around me scattered like arrowheads.  
Some have slipped up to the surface, and lie there  
disguised as stones; after millions of years  
they still remember how to hide in the mud.  
They are waiting for the sea to come back.  
They are dulled now, dry, brittle;  
they glisten only in their dreams  
of the old sea,  
of when they lived and their bodies shone  
as they will  
when they take on form again, swim  
through the rocks, shatter them, reach from their shells  
like flowers growing from dead soil in the rain  
that will fall when the time comes  
to begin again.