

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.