POETRY OHIO
ART OF THE STATE: AN ANTHOLOGY OF OHIO POEMS

A Cornfield Review Special Issue

$5.00

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Cornfield Review
The Ohio State University at Marion
1465 Mt. Vernon Avenue
Marion, Ohio 43302-5695
(614) 389-2361

This special issue of *Cornfield Review*, published by The Ohio State University at Marion, is supported by grants from the Ohio Arts Council, the College of Humanities of The Ohio State University and the Office of Research and Graduate Studies of The Ohio State University.

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With the support of the Ohio Arts Council

Poetry Ohio, Art of the State: An Anthology of Ohio Poems

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Introduction

I

This collection, the second special issue of *Cornfield Review,* is meant to stand as a companion volume to the first, *73 Ohio Poets,* published in 1978. While *73 Ohio Poets* is an anthology of poems on diverse subjects by Ohio poets, *Poetry Ohio* is a collection of Ohio poems of place. *Poetry Ohio* contains the work of 60 poets: 86 poems selected from approximately 1,000 submitted by nearly 300 poets. The Editorial Board, James Bertolino, Alberta Turner and I, attempted to select the best of the writing that came to us.

Poems were solicited through announcements in literary journals and newsletters around the country, through fliers sent directly to poets who now live and work in Ohio or who once did, and through what is perhaps the most effective means of communication for writers and editors, word of mouth.

While I do not for a moment believe that there exists an identifiable "Ohio poem" that speaks a unique language, I do feel that poets are uniquely qualified to portray a sense of their place, to fashion from river and field, high-rise and vacant lot the stuff of symbol and myth. A volume of Ohio poems, carefully conceived, can be like nothing else. It *means,* I am convinced, to live or to have spent time in Ohio. It was my intention from the start to freeze time with this collection, to make of the state a work of art.

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You might expect Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey or Mount Snowden, the New Englands of Robinson, Frost and Mary Oliver, James Wright's seedy Ohio River neighborhoods, Richard Hugo's ghostly Montana towns, Whitman's Mannahatta and W. C. Williams' Paterson to be places so limiting, delineated as they are by exact degrees of longitude and latitude, so confining as to curtail severely the effects of the poetry such poets make of such places. But we are in so many ways creatures of sense that just the opposite takes place in the well-made poem of place. Such locales can animate and be animated by their poems to such an extent that each particular becomes the universal, each specific the mythic, each place the only place.

In the successful place poem the poet takes to heart the lay of the land, photographs with the eye and sketches with the hand each landmark, breathes the air and tastes the water, places his or her ear to the ground and listens.

Of course, place can be *here* and *there.* Ten years ago, as a student, thanks to the beneficence of good friends, I left this country for the first time and went to Ireland. I walked the Dublin of Bloom and felt closer to my native Cleveland; scaled the heights of Yeats' Knocknerea and Ben Bulben and understood better the hills around Bellefontaine and Athens; slogged over the peat bogs of Seamus Heaney and thought of flowering beanfields around Marion. I still bear on my tongue the sweetness of the cream, the rank perfume of burning turf and tepid stout. The same words, but changed utterly. If I had three lifetimes to write through I could never get it all down. Such going to other places makes poets of us all. Returning home, like Whitman from New Orleans, we find we have picked up things to say.

To the ancients each rivulet, grove and tor was divine. Diodorus of Sicily writes of a lake not far from my own Erie: "Whoever has drunk of it falls into a frenzy and accuses himself of every sin committed in secret." Even the Hebrew god lived on a particular mountain, and the people were promised *land.* The good poem of place employs the natural energy of *somewhere,* generating power as blades collect the force of rushing wind or falling water.

Place can be haunting, haunted. Where is the location on this earth where no one was conceived, born, where no one died? Every inch or acre reverberates with the beating of hearts and lungs of the living and once-living. The dead have named nearly every place

we can visit or inhabit. What they have left we can sense. Place poems enable us to be in two places at once, to live forever, to leave whenever we wish this confining tent of bone and flesh.

I can think of few poets who do not make use, at least on occasion, of such energy. Even T. S. Eliot, as cerebral as he can be, takes us to real mean streets that stink of gritty, yellow smoke and to Little Giddings that run like no other streams.

So often the poem that lasts is the poem planted in familiar soil. The compass that points us home. The dowsing rod that, twitching, says *here* there is something good and true. Such poems are maps without which we could not find our way.

Reading the poems in this collection, we travel. We sniff, taste, feel. At the end we are free to become ourselves again, but better selves.

Abstractions, so attractive to young poets, are *nowhere*. It is too easy to build without taking care to survey, lay the foundations, dig the well. Without putting down footers, hanging the plumb line in a steady hand. But such poems seldom last. Our senses crave phrases and lines that reconstruct houses in remembered neighborhoods plank by plank, brick by brick, that plot each creek and alleyway, each molehill and mountain, that sound and look like and have the feel of home. I remember reading somewhere that the Druids took the names of trees and stones and made them letters of their alphabet. So should we.

The places in these poems we can visit time and again; such poems are far more accessible than those that are merely voices, confessions and ideas, or poems about poems about poems.

Where? we feel the human need to ask. Nowhere but *here*, poems of place respond. *There.* And therefore, *everywhere.*

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I wish to thank Alberta Turner and James Bertolino, two poets whose names are well known to those throughout this country who read and write poetry. I have admired their work for years, and came to rely heavily on their critical acumen and good sense. They readily agreed to serve on the Editorial Board, knowing their only reward would be the book itself. My gratitude goes too to the agencies and individuals that provided *Cornfield Review* with the necessary financial assistance: The Ohio Arts Council; Dean Micheal G. Riley of the College of Humanities of The Ohio State University; Associate Vice President Thomas L. Sweeney of The Ohio State University's Office of Research and Graduate Studies; and Dean Francis E. Hazard of The Ohio State University at Marion. I gratefully acknowledge *Poet and Critic* (published by Iowa State University Press), in which a portion of this introductory essay first appeared. I wish to thank too every poet who submitted writing to the Editorial Board; I can truthfully say that, thanks to these Ohio poets, I have learned a great deal.

As you move through these poems, remembering that each poem is itself a place, each word, I hope that you grow in your understanding of Ohio, of Ohio poems, of the state of poetry. These fine poets are expert guides. Go with them.

David Citino
The Ohio State University at Marion

II. THE GEOGRAPHY OF POEMS

Poems are not natural villagers. If they congregate between covers at a particular place, it is not to celebrate the place named on the covers or on the map, but to welcome the readers into places which will be named and explored only by the poems themselves. "Look," they say, "something funny happened on my way to the forum" or "Remember when we were kids and took your dad's car for a ride and the way he looked when ..." or "Do you know that place where they took up the tracks? Did you know a train went through there the other night, a slow freight, all flat cars and...." In each of the poems in this collection we go somewhere with the author. The places have names like Toledo, Oberlin, and Catawba Island, but the trip is always by underground railroad into the place where each of us lives alone.

In this sense all poems are about place: each poem is its own mountain, its own ocean; each poem identifies its poet's bed and chair, his bowl and spoon. With him, we, the readers, are six there and thirty and seventy-five. We wed there and bed and give birth. We stand in front of his mirror and tilt different hat brims or twirl a six-shooter. And we cruise after dark in our secondhand Chevys or Pontiacs, then sit on the porch with our shoes off and our feet on the railing and a six-pack on the floor beside us. Place in this sense is the floor, walls, and ceiling of our selves, and though the name on the envelope may be Howard McCord or Imogene Bolls, Bowling Green or Springfield, Ohio, U.S.A., it might as well read Atlantis or Antarctica. Stand a human soul on its head in space, without up.down, now/then, here/there, and it can neither perceive nor endure.

In this sense of place as center and direction, this anthology is true and representative. In the sense that Ohio is a distinct enough region with a distinct enough culture so that the themes, attitudes, subjects, and voices of native or former or naturalized Ohio poets can be distinguished from Indiana or Pennsylvania poets, place is an artificial separation, like a fence through a pond. Contemporary American culture has so homogenized what both rural and urban Americans read, see, hear, and do that differences among poetic landscapes can only be differences among personal visions. Some poets live in the desert, and desert is desert whether it is named Sahara or Death Valley or an Ohio cornfield after long drought. Some live on an Elm Street that is also La Rue des Trois Poissons and Via San Cristobel. Diane Kendig's poem takes place at sunset from the Terminal Tower in Cleveland, but the mood which caused the sunset clouds to "stack up gray" had also colored her view from the top of the Giralda in Spain and from the Canadian cliffs overlooking Lake Ontario. When Howard McCord says that "Ohio needs three active volcanoes," then has his Duke of Chemical Birds "un[zip] his blue feathers and [streak]/ the President's Garden/ at precisely six P.M.," we know that his Ohio *has* active volcanoes and just where they are.

In the geography of literal place all weathers happen in more or less predictable sequence. In the geography of inner place, of poetry, all islands float, all mountains erupt, and all skies can break blue. In this collection, Ohio is a map of the whole geography of human feeling.

Alberta Turner
Cleveland State University

III. AN ENDOWED DEMOCRACY

73 Ohio Poets was published in 1978, as a special issue of *Cornfield Review*. It was a good, representative collection. Here, six years later, you have another anthology of Ohio-related poems, also published by *Cornfield Review* under the general editorship of David Citino. There are differences between these two volumes, and they're worth exploring. As I assess the poetry, according to such standards as originality in the conception of the poem, vitality in the imagery, music and/or surprise in the use of language, and the dynamics of structure, I am convinced that *Poetry Ohio* is richer, more various, simply offers stronger and better poems than the first anthology. How can this be?

I am certain that the first editorial board was every bit as perceptive and professional as the second. While the second anthology was open to any American poet, and the first restricted to Ohio poets, the great majority of poets in *Poetry Ohio* live in the State—consequently, I don't think the quality of the second volume is due to the influx of poets from other states. It could be that because the poets were allowed to submit previously published poems to the second collection, the editors had better work to choose from. This is an important factor, however, the percentage of previously printed work in *Poetry Ohio* is small. My best answer to why the second anthology is superior is that there are simply more poets writing high-quality poems now than there were in the mid-to-late Seventies.

It's hard to imagine poets such as Gordon Grigsby, Howard McCord, Jane Somerville, Paul Nelson, Elton Glaser and Richard Hague being any better than they are. They, and others in this anthology, have written poems which combine highly-tuned intelligence with erudition, sensitivity, active imagination and the high disciplines of individual craftsmanship—in short, the kind of poems which used to launch and ensure national reputations.

American poetry now is like an endowed democracy. Endowed democracies, those which present a broad range of opportunities and possibilities for all, produce the most fully-developed citizens. Given two decades of increasing activity in small press publishing and community-based literary projects, paralleled by greater and greater interest in contemporary literature in the universities, we are witnessing a new "poetic citizenry" that is unprecedented in its general level of mastery and maturity. Any eclectic and discriminating selection of poems on any subject, or from any region, will provide a full spectrum of the many popular forms and styles being practiced artfully in the U.S.

If, as many of us fear, our country has yet to experience the full social, economic and spiritual wrenching necessary before it can return to the balance of health, we can at least find comfort in knowing we have thousands of accomplished working poets who may come forward to speak of our humanity and pain, and of our grand possibilities.

James Bertolino
University of Cincinnati

MICHAEL ALLEN

Streetlight

We pushed the smooth wood handles,
David and me, the clippings sprayed
back from the mower over our sneakers,
small legs pushing through his thick yard.
A long row, then our four hands heaved
wheels and blades over, pulled the mower
behind us, blades flicking grass high
in the air sounding like helicopters
as we ran back to start the push again.
It was a game, like all summer
in the Cincinnati heat and sweat,
like who could slide like Pete
or smile like Perez. Some parents
laughed by the curb, some kids
played tag between our houses
of white board and brick, kept fiercely neat.

Two kids tossed green fists
of the cut above their heads, all
over: they stood arms outstretched,
necks hunched and surprised—grass
didn't hit but fluttered about
like little wings without birds and
you could hear all the evening chirping
as the streetlight came on.

The machine was all clatter behind us,
like locust or shadow getting larger.
Little Steve ran in the green spray,
kicking up the new stuff, getting his shoes
green in the cool green air.
We pulled hard when a small stick
jammed the blades, making our legs
push at the ground, like big runners.
But we looked around, saw Steve reaching
for his top middle finger, lost.
The the air felt fast, our hearts
loud in our heads, everything
grayer and darker, parents coming.

And Dave and Danny there with me and
yes we were talking, laughing, not looking
no we didn't know how dark it got
all of a sudden, night standing
around us cold on our bare legs

grass damp on our shoes, in our hair.
We stared forward through bodies
standing around us and the houses,
red brick and curtained windows, hit
hard by the streetlight, were so puny
that the hurt settled in to stay.

TOM BARDEN

toledo poem

since you passed here yesterday
we have sold seven mobile homes
—billboard sign in toledo

I
the sky
is stitched
with birds
as I step out on the frozen breakers
of Lake Erie
exploring past the last footprints
walking to Canada
I think of Jolliet in 1669
paddling over the St. Clair
paddling down the Detroit
until his eyes opened
full of maps
on this
I poke the iceribs
think of the fish below
their surprise to hear me
tapping across their ceiling
there is a photo of the governor
on my folding map
he looks puzzled in his tie
he says
industry, business, welcome
I imagine him standing on the hillside
at Kent State
his arms outstretched
chanting industry business welcome

I fold him
back in my pocket
and look around
that shoreline is Ohio
to the left is Michigan
all Indian names
and all trapped
like the lakes, locked
look they freeze entirely over
you can jump on them
they say there is oil
under the soil under the fish
derricks will rise
out of these waters

jungle jims nobody plays on
signs— do not walk on this lake
shit, I wanted a sea
this is the edge of America too
the third coast
and it's just a lake
by a swamp
the water I live by
and do not understand
except you take Route 2, east
look for seagulls
and go home

II

So maybe you can tell me
if I say, baby
I like your company
where I can find this place
get me high
drive me around
tell me you own the town
the street names are your ancestors
there are factory strikes
and spark plug fortunes
at your family reunion
so maybe you can show me
how to live here
take me to a premiere
of the symphony
good movies
good jazz
where you go
what you do
I'll show you my sheets
my hot confusion
my dreams
in the huge pavillion
in the Wildwood Preserve
where the city fathers
will never find us
please baby
I need to know
make a strong case for here
for anywhere
for terrorism
Zionism

resistance
plain living
repose
tell me your dreams
what you would name the streets
if they really were yours
what you would name me if I were
what kind of street would I be
for you
why don't you have any secrets
what will your body mean to me later
what noise do you suppose the river makes
when the ice breaks up
and sends forty-ton blocks
crashing into the startled lake
in the spring

III

what is that seagull doing in the metropark
he seems so out of place
whitecap white among the maples
he looks like a senior citizen
in a government van
but he seems to make himself at home
he chips at straws he
hops across the bike trail
he picks at tree seeds
scratches
all untidy and unconcerned
he's seen the rolling ocean
been
stitched into the sky
he looks up
and hops into the air
of toledo
he doesn't care where he lives

CAROL JENE BEEBE

Snakeskin

Lake Erie, Catawba Island

The lake returns, a twentieth-century Lazarus,
and now the islanders have faces that sag
from years of cosmetic smiles
fading with April deposits.

The shopkeeper waits, his years impatient
with his dwindling stock. He gives away items
marked "imported from Japan."
To sell the shop would mean his death.

The woman in the lakefront house
collects dollar bills for parking.
She clutches them against her J.C. Penny shift,
her concealed middle thick from Florida winters.

Her husband circles his trailer court at night;
he is the block chairman, sometimes knocking
on doors.
His skin is etched like veins of English ivy
with lines of prosperity.

The captain of the ferryboat
makes the trip to the next island
in sixteen minutes now. It used to take him
thirty.
The fee remains the same.

At the side of the road
a discarded snakeskin
dries in the sun. Its owner
has slipped away to grow another.

JOHN M. BENNETT

No Boy

I was thinking of a suitcase smoldering in the
basement I was walking toward the window I
was placing my mouth on the glass I
was seeing a beertruck thudding down the street I
crossed my eyes and saw my eyes
smothered against my face

I walked behind the empty discount store saw
a rusty trashburner, a bin of
flaking tires, a giant compactor with
GOD and REFUSE COLUMBUS on the side I
stared out at the ragged woods behind the place,
heaps of rubble, splintered trees and
thought of shopping carts stuffed with
lawnmower wheels buried beneath the mud where I stood

I tried to leave, my feet were stuck I'm
lurching forward, lurching back the
meat is jerking from my shoes I
see my head float above a single shoulder my
neck a smear of smoke, staccato screeches where my
voice should be I
start to move I'm staggering in the woods

PAUL BENNETT

Bicentennial Piece
(1776-1976)

Living close to orchard and garden
I follow the best practices I know:

After Thoreau, I fertilize with birdsong.

After Jefferson, I am a small farmer
Attempting to grow large in spirit,
To become one who can identify
Tyrants by sound, sight and smell.

After my gardening friend Ransom,
Who labored long to raise rhubarb, I say:
May God bless you and yours, dear sir.

But I kissed nobody's ass when I came,
I will kiss nobody's ass while here,
And when I go I shall trust the hands that take me.

An Amish Sketch

I

It could be a Saturday late in April,
You could be one hour past seven years old,
Your name would be Jonathan Yoder,
Your father's horse Frisk would be hitched
To the rail east of the sandstone courthouse.
You climb on the rail at Frisk's nose and look:
There are no paints or palominos,
But solids—blacks, whites, sorrels, grays—
Horse flies, and a covey of sparrows
Scrounging for grain in the steaming manure.
Frisk nudges your shoe and picks at the strings;
Balancing, you bend over and finger his velvet lip
And that of Yaggi's mare who is stretching too,
Then you spring at the sparrows: "Meow!"
And run to catch up with your father.

II

You could have come into town
With your father, mother, and three sisters:
Rebecca and the twins—Mary and Maria—

You would have brought flats of sweet and hot peppers,
Tomatoes, eggplants, and Brussels sprouts
Already delivered, two trips, all in file carrying,
You at the end as always, the twins
Not walking as fast as you can walk.
Rebecca even doubting you can carry your flat,
But you did, and now your father and you head
Through the ground level west door of the courthouse.
You laugh because each stall has a spittoon,
And neither your father nor you chews tobacco,
When you're done you work up a spit anyway,
Then go to the wash basin and mirror,
With both hands you wet down your hair, sides and back,
Then use the cake of pine soap, and towel,
And read aloud the janitor's handwritten note:
"The man who finds a moment's ease in this room
Should know his neighbor has his needs too
And leave it cleaner than he found it."

III

Your father and you do.

IV

At the restroom door your father's hand
That makes Frisk and the household go,
Touches yours and leaves seven presents.
You walk with him past Muhlenberg's window
And eyebuy a barlow pocketknife, a kite,
A pair of ice skates cut to half price, and meet
Your sisters emerging with three flats
Labeled "Pacific Giant Delphiniums."
Your father says, "She's buying flowers again."
Your mother says, "They're for the front yard—
Marigolds and shastas will brighten the side."
"You have used annuals all around, Hilda,"
Your father says, and his teeth shine in his beard
And you know he wants you to remember your mother's gift
When you are with him tending the delphiniums
Evening after evening among blue and purple heavens,
Chasing bees, butterflies, and humming birds.

V

Flats high, their faces flowering on green,

Rebecca and the twins walk off to the buggy
While your father and mother and you enter
The store to get on with the Saturday buying.
Your father ends up carrying the box of groceries,
You carry the bundle of light blue sateen
For Rebecca's graduation dress,
And you all three stop before the radio
Where a newscaster is saying: "Again he condemned
Bearded men who use filthy four-letter words,"
And you ask your father what he means.
Your father raises his hand to his beard, smiles,
Shakes his head, and stops before the pocket knives.
"Jonathan, you can take your pick here."
You point to the row of barlows, second from left,
He pays for it and hands it to you.
"Thanks, but you already gave me seven dimes..."

VI

Then you finger-test the bigger blade and ask:
"What about the other—filthy four-letter words?"
Your father says: "For filthy four-letter words,
Try *help* and *love*." "I know they're not," you protest.
Your father motions your mother toward the door.
"They are when they're not made real." She says:
"Jonathan, use your head and figure them, try
Bomb, burn, and *kill.*" You put the knife away,
And test the words—she's right. But your father
Is chuckling in his beard. "Hilda,
It would take an angel to keep that politician
From getting messed up in his body's functions."
He turns to you. "As Uncle Josh used to say:
People who stew over *piss, shit* and *fuck*
But encourage *hate* are all fouled up."
"Uncle Josh had been to sea," your mother says,
"And he could be particular,
He even asked: 'Have gentle people gone competitive?'
When you installed running lights on the buggy."
"Did Uncle Josh say that?" Your father laughs.
"I'd have told him I do what the law requires—
When it's reasonable." He holds the door
And your mother goes out, but stops to say:
"Happy birthday all year long, Jonathan."

ROY BENTLEY

Night Fishing the Ohio

He knows something, this old shovelhead.
Close in, like good whiskey
he has the blood believing again.
Yet a part of him needs the hook,
its pull into light to keep going.
The Masonic Lodge of Belpre, Ohio would agree.
On the near bank, two of their number
brace a weight of wood and oxbone,
carry it stumbling, side-stepping an old dog.

In a clearing by lantern light,
every full belly recalls the flesh,
takes its turn, hefts ax and sledge,
breaks the ribs, spine,
legs stripped now of all that muscle.
I feel each hard blow
ring at the bait-end of twelve-pound test.
Bone bits spray outward in the dark.
Upstream, deer lean across and into barbed wire,
the apples there worth a little blood.

33 South

In fall in Athens County, truck exhaust
mixes with the scent of wild onions;
busloads of students hang from windows,
toss pop bottles in high arcs at roadsigns.

As the bus turns I catch sight of one
blond sixteen year old, imagine
Sunday at the Midland, buttered popcorn
between us, holding hands,
John Wayne to an Indian, "That's far enough."
Then slowly the feel of hand becomes breast, thigh

billboard for a Baptist church,
holes in it,
verse reading *I am,*
hillside, ash branches filling in
the Way, the Truth and the Light.

In Ohio, We Celebrate As Best We Can

1
Over the highest hill in Kettering, Ohio
Beth and Wes Vines run
into fields of day lily and Queen Anne's lace,
the test always who can play at dying
well enough—best one dead, first one up.
Master of the Quick Death,
Wes can drop from any low tree
the way he sees gray television Germans do
under Vic Morrow's righteous Thompson sub.

Actually, they play in a junkyard.
What wildflowers there are
grow through truck parts, old Hotpoint stoves.
The orchard that borders
is full is Winesap and June apples.

When they have had enough of counterfeiting death,
they build a tunnel under the junk,
digging and hauling out wagonfuls of cool earth,
shoring up ceiling and wall with crate wood
taken from the orchard first thing each morning.
When the tunnel is finished and wide enough
they play there until the roof falls,
then, buried to the neck, squirm
like cicadas
blind-digging hard Ohio to smell a junkyard.

2
First day of deer season, old Chevy
smokes up 33 South, eight-point buck tied to the trunk.
At every bump, body rises
drops back, rain freezing on the eyes.

Outside Nelsonville, a wire breaks.
Forelegs and head drop, drag behind in the dark.
Taillights blaze.
A door slams. Another.
Two men stand in moonlight,
pass a pint of whiskey once before lifting.

3
I can still smell Jody McLaughlin's perfume
as we danced in the union hall on Hudson Avenue,
ten years from high school.

Beside us, Dave Hanley—married, one boy—
leaned into Sherri Link.
He had wanted her since we were freshmen.

In near dark they moved,
Jody telling me of a job she was glad to have
what with Reagan
and half that small town looking for work.

As we danced and talked
I thought of the only girl in tenth grade
who would kiss me on a dare.
In the hall after history class
she gave me reason to stand perfectly still.
Any movement and I would begin forgetting.

4
On a low hill, a tire-swing
turns from the last and lowest branch of a maple.
Blond boy, face-down,
sees the earth blur before him,
the turning already an old friend.
In the house down the hill
his grandmother bakes gingerbread, calls his name—
her thin voice, the short ROWEE.
Where he is, rope tightens,
the noise it makes a kind of singing
like the hinge of a door.
Above all this, he hears and is wiggling
from the old 2-ply tire to the crest of the hill,
calling up the taste of her hot ponebread—
wet, soaking with butter.
Over the top he yells to her,
prepares to feel her apron, each sticky-sweet stain.

5
Off to the side of the road in and out
of Carbon Hill, Ohio
there is a place just wide enough for a '68 Chevy.
First warm day in March,
I sit eating apricots and bread,
discussing death with a woman who sees it
as the thing pressing even blood forward.
Crumbs collect in her lap as she talks.
Outside, a great quiet
collides with the notion it is somehow important

to make noisy sense.
Brushing herself, she hands back the apricots.
Cows, wintered down the hollow,
call as coal trucks slow,
shift for the tight turn into Carbon Hill.

MICHELLE BOISSEAU

Tornado

The air went green.
The house shook. A window buckled
and broke. Over the trees the funnel
staggered closer, then drew off
with its shower of glass. My father
has no way of knowing how we weathered it,
so he sets out, maddened
as I've only begun to understand.
Until now I couldn't see him better
than the darkness that absorbed us,
the sputtering candles that pleased us.
He feels his way through streets wholly changed.
One road becomes so churned up
he has to back down it, passing twice
the house with its rooms exposed,
a couple wading near the bed.
Then there is the heap of boards
a man pounds with his fists.
Finally the moon rides out of the clouds
and my mother's house stands
among all that has fallen. He'd been a thought
that came to us then passed, a bit of paper
snagged in the lawn then blown on down the street.
So I'm thinking now of his joyfulness
how nervously he leans inside the door,
saying, Come out
and look how clear the sky is.

IMOGENE L. BOLLS

Metal Detecting

Prowl gravel parking lots
and country churchyards
looking for watches, rings,
old coins—pieces of silver
lost from the groins
of the past.

Grass is best, and parks,
especially on playgrounds where grownups
swing like pendulums,
like children, upsidedown;

or around picnic tables
where pockets
have pulled out with keys
at Sunday socials;

or in sideyards of old farms
where laundry flags
caught wind, unfurling
trousers of their dimes.

"Listen to the rhythm.
Don't be fooled by screws and nails.
Dig straight down,"
the White's Directions said.

Commotion does not mean
a sure find.
Keep looking.
Earth is magnetic.
You may turn up quarters
from the eyes of the dead.

History Repeats

The sparrows are nesting again
behind the basketball goal.
Twigs dislodged and bits of string trail
from the backboard like the tail
of a kite, jarred loose by the big
boom of the ball.
Year after year they choose
this shield, this shaky fortress,
over and over the assault
of cannons bursting and striking their mark.
Afterwards, in the deepening dark
they go home, return
to their young left
in the war zone,
choosing again and again
the suffering they know.

GLENN BROOKE

Aunt Laurel

I waved each morning on my way to school,
and Aunt Laurel waved back.
At night I could see her porch light,
a warm yellow star.

She was an aunt to every kid
on our ridge, and the ridge over.
In August we ate her green apples,
belching like Spring Herefords.
She scared us with stories about
the Moss Man (whom she knew personal),
who ate the eyes and toes of moles.

Rocking fifty years on her porch,
she never married, never accepted Jesus.
After she died they found in her cellar,
cool and patient with dust,
sixty-two quarts of blackberry jam.

JOSEPH BRUCHAC

Fallen Timbers

We came in an old car, pale as blue sky,
the same sky Little Turtle saw
when he and other strong-hearted men
tried to hold back that heavy snow
which was drifting over Indian land.
They won great battles before this last one
lost in August of 1794 to Mad Anthony Wayne.

Here, on a bluff above the river
which flows into the freshwater seas,
at Turkey Foot Rock the Ottawa chief
of that same name rallied
his warriors before he died.
For many years after, read a metal legend,
offerings of tobacco were placed on the rock.

Down in the Maumee River below,
there where it ripples white,
two dozen men stood fishing for walleye,
seeking the touch of another life
at the end of their line.

I borrowed a cigarette, stripped
off filter and paper to hold tobacco
within my hand and as I came
close to that ancient stone, blue-gray
and pitted with pores like a giant's face,
I saw that it still held tobacco,
some fresh, some faded to lichen gray
and the rock breathed, its spirit trembling
my hands as I placed my offering.

New monuments of tall cut granite
have risen there at Fallen Timbers,
but their squared shapes will never match
the earth-worn strength of this land
which can be shared but never owned,
that pledge held like the tobacco
within a remembering stone.

CAROL CAVALLARO

Visited
Jackson County, Ohio

Sustained, austerely, numb
in sunlight, I live alone, cold
and intellectual.
Cooking makes me ill, the
blood everywhere.
The house's little heat
steams into the air, a sweet

stew, and no one
can see me, and there's no one
here, two rooms,
the bags of leaves
bunkering the house's
joints, a dog,
a man sometimes.

A sweater stuffs the mouth
of the sink,
but underneath
it gurgles, infantile.
Up the road
houses hold their hills
more firmly.

I'm in the wind. I know
the country well, dark signal
by the railings in the snow,
a frozen rug the monument
to some perfect far distance,
artificial deer
white as Greek statues, having

lost the paint,
the collapsed
house deep in the woods
flying up in the air,
unloosing
its life again.
I wasn't ready

when the time came, for marriage
with a man outside the window, for
whatever visited. Winter
has thinned my bones;
my fingers begin

to freeze; opening
the door, I froze

to the aluminum frame, like picking
up an ice cube, my skin
steely silver, mercury heavy.
New silence peels more strips
from the grating of my chest,
natural, neat, peeled
simply. The dog's

small monkey face
cheers me as I follow
waves that shake from trees, I grow
balanced; I even fall
free sometimes. The books
staring out from the shelves
are withdrawn

like stars in the comfort of daylight.
They're bulk,
a sort of holy presence,
and they understand differences
among things. Parting and
bringing
forth, I always

want my mother back;
under our dark skins
we were the same. That's what
the mind can do:
bring back the dead
or refuse them,
tear a baby from a womb

to leave her less like diamond.
In a corner, in a pocket
the mind can hold
everything at once.
A part of day sky,
narrow as a ribbon, holds
a tinny glint,

a sun.
In the stream the few trees stoop
a little
growing there.

There's rain on snow,
and a coppery
prickling in my breasts,

pure
vegetable.
Now my bones shake together
like a game of hanged man
in reverse,
like a wooden toy on a string.
I want to go back down the dark.

DEWITT CLINTON

Kansas Iowa Ohio

Ghosts fly north in Iowa
Anytime they want. Yet we
Must pass through that part of the state.
Even if we do drive
With the sun it will be
Dangerous and really insane. But you will
Say something about friends
So that we can hold out maybe
One day, one night, there. The hard
Drive into Ohio will be all
We can possibly do the second day.
We will cross many unpronounceable
Rivers and we will pretend
To know something about salt
And how it is formed in caves
Hundreds of miles back in Kansas.
You plan a history book so we
Will know tribal migrations,
New dialects. We need, also, to know
How landmarks near highways are noted.
With those two things, we can enter
Ohio with this deep terrific grin.

Poem: Fake Walk

Out there is the fall. It is color
You say. I look silly, say let's try
And walk it. You say I can't even see
The top of the cornfields. There are
Blackbirds out here. You say yes. I say
They might eat us, using their beaks.
You say we can light campfires to our
Sides. I talk about light. You talk
about the sound of caw. I say let's
Walk the edge, it might be safer. You
Say that's where wolves bones are.
We take the walk. You grab a stick
Calling it your walking tree and it will
Protect you from those flying birds.
I say you'll probably get them with the branches
And the sharp twigs on the end. Pretty
Soon we can no longer avoid the forest.
We go in. There are no more hoards
Of birds, only reverent trees
Singing Jonie loves Al.
We look through one edge of the forest.
A buck in the trees comes close, whispers
What are you doing here. We hear a fake mynah bird.

MARY CROW

Home Free

This missing person
has not returned.
We could not find her
all the hot afternoons
of childhood.
Dug in among peonies
we watched the riverbank
for her return,
thinking she might come
upstream by boat
poised in the prow
or walking
through the tall grass
with a long stick,
come to get us.
In the kitchen
the deserted husk
of her body
went through its motions
as we pranced around her
invisible.
We paraded outdoors
and picked herbs.
We chanted for
the spirit's return:
"Mother, Mother, come back,
come back home."
And we waited.
Not good at waiting,
we burned matches
in a pile
and sighed ghosts.
We ran away,
hoping for pursuit,
hoping to be missed,
hoping to be called home,
but no one, nothing,
pursued us
and no one called,
Allee, allee,
come home free.

JIM DANIELS

March in Waterville

Tonight a pianist performs
in the school auditorium
the music rolling back and forth
into a lullaby for winter.

Tonight in the gym
ten boys race up and down the floor
the crowd responding to each basket
to this mad tattooing of spring.

*

An old man walks
humming the song of the pianist
and a young boy bounces a basketball
shooting alone on the outdoor court.

Late tonight in Ohio
all there is in this whole city
stretching out flat into fields ripe for planting
is an old man humming a bouncing ball
a young boy bouncing the piano's notes
blending, the notes, ball rising, music everywhere
and swollen hearts pounding hills
up out of this flat land.

PETER DESY

Leaving Columbus, Ohio
November, 1982

In this midwest of the world, don't
calculate the odds or think about your job.
Forget luggage and head west
on 70, toward the tall buildings.
then north on 71, away from the city,
past all exits. Fasten your eyes
on the white stitching and believe
you can escape. Have no plans that can
defeat you, or chances are you will return
to coffee brewing on the counter-top,
the dog scratching at the door,
the sun illumining the kitchen table.
This is the time to leave, when
cornfields are dead and trees
have quit their lives, stem and leaf.
Drive as if your body were an old thing
the weather will soon slough off and believe
with all your heart the distance
that you cross is real; the new skin
that itches under your dead cells
will glisten then grow tough. A waitress
you knew in '76 and other dark figures
from your past will stand beside
the road to flag you down, but drive
into the night until the glacial stars
are thick and Columbus is a map's small
point on a meridian you've sailed beyond.

SALLY ANN DRUCKER

Poetry Mafia: Youngstown

After each reading
they go to Joe's bar
in dark glasses, wide hats
to break codes
trade metaphors
collect credits
celebrate hits
cement relationships
launder poems
for publication
shoot their mouths off
gun down other poets.

The godfather
an old timer
twirls his moustache
knows his poets
and their rackets:
he makes sure
they don't steal
from each other.

JOHN D. ENGLE, JR.

August Ohio

Ohio wears a hat
of tasseled corn
fringed with Queen Anne's lace
and chicory.
Dressed in a gown of willows,
slightly worn,
she does her dance
and sings her song to me.
Throughout the hot
and sultry days of haze,
she waltzes through
the meadows and the hills.
Singing a grape and apple song,
she plays
like a country child
that knows no cares nor ills.
Addicted to her movements
and her song,
curved in the warm,
green comfort of her arms,
I am convinced
this is where I belong—
breathing the beauty
of trees and streams and farms.
Through megaphones
of morning-glory vine,
Ohio sings her love
and makes it mine.

JENNIFER PIERCE EYEN

The Lockmaster's Table

We caught a "floater" in the locks tonight.
Two weeks dead, maybe more...
Yep, caught up in the wickets he was.
Who was it Bill?
Well, they ain't sure.

The current's been strong
And the water's been warm —
Prob'ly some bum, he looked real bad.
Hand me some coffee, how many's that been?
Ah, that's about the fourth one we've had.

That all the potatoes?
Is the gravy all gone?
Yeah, old Lock 'leven's seen a lot go by.
Mind when that old ferry caught fire?
Now, I forget how many did die.

Remember last spring when we found that kid?
Yeah, a damn shame, he was twelve or about.
Hey Bill, do you remember his name?
Hell, I see 'em stuck
And I just fish 'em out.

My wife sent some pie tonight,
You guys want some?
It's pretty damn good.
Nah, I'm checkin' the wickets again.
Full moon last night, so I think I should.

Yep, we caught a "floater" in the locks tonight.
Two weeks dead, maybe more...
Who in the hell do you think it was?
Well, like they said,
They ain't sure.

ROBERT FLANAGAN

Indian Summer

A white moon, white houses, white barns,
mercury lights pulsing like hearts
and a mist hanging sweet as long sleep
over fields of shocked corn.

Nobody moves about the pale farm yards.
Still as possums, houses await daylight:
barns groan with the weight
and aching of the dreams of animals.

Breezes cooled by moonlight
stream like silk over my body.
Filled with being in the night,
I move as if tranced down gravel roads

to sink my feet past time in the Olentangy.
Scrub oak behind me gives off a small noise.
Belonging to its shadow, an owl hoots
softly three times like an Iroquois.

Possum

for Mike Harrah

Sharing an escaped past
that night visiting back in Ohio,
we sat past midnight on the damp grass
drinking to the swell of our futures.

Moon-silent, like a ghost
conjured by the charms of memory—
a possum our being there startled
into flight down the lawn's slope,

his white body blurring, light
sliding from him like a snail's track.
We broke from our trance to chase
and lose him in a wood. Coming back

breathing hard with the satisfaction
of giving our ghost a good run,
we complained that the past should haunt us.
Yet within us we had heard a calling,

knew now what we should have known
from the rounding of our thoughts.
Threatened, the possum trusted to instinct:
Showing us the way, he headed home.

ROBERT FOX

Springfield Journal #2

The air is tortured
with the smell of tar.
I imagine a bonfire
of old tires in the schoolyard
where great meals of slag
feed the concrete.
In the dim hall a girl
looking the other way
crashes into me.
Her eyes accuse me.
The silver handle of a comb sticks out
of a boy's hairdo
like a crank.
His eyes are pieces of a windshield.

This school is a huge
capsule slowly lowered into the sea.
My ears feel a great pressure
you have to pull hard
to get a garbled word
within hearing.
Soon everyone
will stop speaking.

Springfield Journal #3

The streets are wet.
Before dawn a balloon loaded with dew
& the thought of bulbs & seeds
burst above the town.
The western sky passes north
like the hull of a destroyer.
The white poles of the Sunoco sign
raise the sun.
Plumbers, construction workers,
businessmen enter the restaurant
drink coffee & eat breakfast
watching the tops of semis
slide by above the town.

America is scored with a music
of speed of identical destinations
images without mirrors
repeating themselves
in great leaps
like diagrams of radio waves.
Identities burnt
like torn recaps on the highways.

But in this restaurant
between the staves of the roads
you can't hear the trucks.
A backyard laced in with chain link
protects a garden plot
below a clothesline
the upturned earth black.
This summer the town will
shimmer like a mirage.
A few tulips & roses
will light the dry shadows.

ELTON GLASER

Deciduous Variations on Akron

Fall is our favorite conclusion.

We can do without
the leaves backlit from heaven,
the gold coronas, yellow of old skulls,
and reds sparking like volleys from a banjo,
in whose presence the fine-tuned hairs
of tourists vibrate and gawk.

The sky goes nowhere, a sealed confession,
the stone of Lazarus undisturbed.
We like it that way. In this tale,
the hero turns back, his horse sore-footed,
the sword heavy in his hand, never guessing
that the girl's wild cries were just
one more sad joke from the dragon.

Three wishes are never enough.
We want the axioms of autumn,
X and Y of the big trees, a natural algebra
printed on the air like
"the timetable for a Chinese railway."

This is the landscape of necessity,
adventures of the ornery eye, all freaks
and flaws, aberration of atoms.
Here, the brain spins with the speed
of rearwheels in slush, snowsmoke,
the engine in a high hot whine.

And we come to the dead end
of ourselves, as if some needle pierced us
pointing out true north, the lodestar
that leads wise men to Akron—no switchbacks
or byways, no last detour
around the damage, only this white weather
where nothing changes, everything hurts.

Seasonal Adjustments

1
This winter's gone on so long
I can smell spring
even in the urinals swabbed down
with pine oil, a scent so strong
it clears a path from here
to Slidell, Louisiana
where once more I stand
moonfaced and confused
in a circle of tall trees
snarled at the top
and let the sunlight
warm me from the earth up.

2
Still north of April
and a cold rain
splinters the state, sharp
as an icepick through the heart.
I don't need this, even a blind
baffling of fog would do, something
sullen and sluggish
to hide my life in. Outside the storm window
the driveway writhes with worms
and two sorry chickadees
peck at the hanging feedbox,
their wings slicked back, their skullcaps
bobbing at the seder of seeds.
What do they care
for the byzantine misery of taxes?
Their eyes don't crawl upward
when the evening news
pours its blue light on the pork chops.
They don't feel in their wet breasts
a surge, a sick fear they'll be
condemned to die in Ohio,
that last outpost of civilized asylum.
They bring back people I once knew
on the Mississippi, who loved
its loose romance, its sidle
and rich silt, its minstrel winds,
and could not spell that river's name
the same way twice.

3
I'm writing this poem
sometime before the last snowfall becomes
the first flood, each flake a wheel
spinning with my limbs
lashed to the cold spokes.
I'm writing this poem
while others defend the beachheads
of Florida, throwing their money
at the sun, bribing the sea,
living on grapefruit and degradation.
I'm writing this poem
the way the ancient Persians
pursued their hard affairs,
drinking the night down
to its conclusion, then taking up
counsel again when the cups were quenched,
sober in dull daylight.
You will find this story
lodged in the nine volumes of Herodotus,
a man just Greek enough
to tell the truth
as though it were a lie
too beautiful to disbelieve.

MARILYN GRAVETT

Two Fields Back

So exposed, to lie in a field
threshed first of wheat,
then of straw,

to lie in a smother of sky
so exposed, feel alfalfa hay
struggle from the stubble

and the sky bears down
in a relentless arc of glare.
The farmer tells me soybeans

are two fields back,
these flat lands parceled
in his conviction of mastery,

so I look, an untrained eye,
at an endless roam, oblivious
but for the color of crop

to a difference in field,
so exposed, how can anyone
possess the faith to possess it?

Moving Back to Ohio

The land flattens
like a body settling into a grave.
In winter, frost fattens the vetch in the ditches,
and the trees, luminous, hover
over their roots like breath:
this is the landscape we were born to.

The day is gray and grown long
as an old woman's hair,
in the south the sky steadily darkens.
Close relatives await us.

A hawk on a roadpost stiffly watches,
unruffled by exhaust.

A child comes from the backseat to tap us,
and we realize all along we've been sleeping,
and that this is the scenery we have missed.

GORDON GRIGSBY

Burning the Forest

You could walk for days without seeing the sky.
After nights black as a windowless room,
you woke to twilight that lasted
all day, that first and last gray
of uncertain shadows, ambiguous branches
not an arm's length away, in which your own hand,
brought up to your eyes, seemed
a foreign thing, not yet
completely formed or already disappearing.
Wolf light, they called it.

And, untethered, hearing cries in their sleep,
made fields, made light. For years
the smoke of burning trees
obscured the sun from Erie to the Ohio River.
For years they worked in a gray-yellow light
without shadows, as if in an eclipse.
A few used for building, the rest
burned. The large ones, thick as three or four men,
they girdled and left to die, waking
later to huge leprous shapes
that would burn standing. The animals
withdrew: bears, pumas, martens, elk,
timber wolves, eagles.

For a while they still knew the trees:
which one for dye, which one for tea
and liniment, which one for axe handles.
Dreamed of them. Then,
so gradually they didn't notice it,
they knew only maize, tobacco, vegetables.
And didn't miss the animals: stragglers were killed,
and others stayed. Other birds
came, the ones that like
the field's edge, a house not far away.
Hawks still circled overhead.

And still circle now and then.

Highbanks, Like a Child Asleep in Its Own Life

The small creek that drifts down to the river
in slow numberless curves
is buried in leaves.

Branches and trunks
stand like streams
feeding the sky into the ground. The banks

are gone under a sleep
that covers the world, hills, rocks,
fallen trees, like a second

ground over the ground. But in the blurred
bed, fragments of open water glisten,
and there, bending close

as a jeweller over his work, you see
the surface trembles
with a secret current running under the leaves

like the shape of your life eluding you forever.

Return of the Repressed at Hoover Reservoir

He weighted the bag with two car wheels
and slept,
but four months later she came up.
Some boys fooling in a boat
found her bobbing slowly through
copper-colored water,
silver back just breaking the surface
like a large jellyfish.
From the teeth, those tough parts
that last two million years,
they pieced the unrecognizable together
and found a car
missing two wheels, rusting deep in weeds
behind his house.
Suddenly, as if matter itself had turned against him,
after all those centuries, his life was over.

River Trace

North of the West North Broadway Bridge,
under the access to 315,
huts in a half moon faced the river,
ringed by a low wall of trash.
Evenings in 4000 B.C. hawks floating home
to high trees saw a crescent
of small fires, over the heads
of wood-mice drifted
notes of a two-stringed gourd. A woman
with a Siberian face, color
of the oak leaf at her heel,
notches a bone with another day, the child
at her elbow idly kicking fire-lit dust
on the fire. Does she
think about time, know they'll leave nothing
but the flint in her hand, a trace
of red ocher in filled holes? Her dead
are buried near her, outside the fire,
and tied. Or is it still—water, night,
her own hand—*only eternity*
she knows? Even now
there's a patch left, not quite covered
with fill, flooded and left, flooded and left.

RICHARD HAGUE

Limestone

Shell on tooth on bone, lime's
binding tight around them. No light:
a hundred fifty million years.
But watch, this common Tuesday in July,
the boy across Duck Creek
crack a flat slab open
and shout to see a fish
come blackly out of rock, chopping
with its teeth the strange and sudden sun.

Or elsewhere, by the Great Miami,
a rough-ridged, hand-sized stone,
dumped here years ago
from some high place in Ohio
once the delta of the Appalachian River.
Two hundred thirty million years.
But watch again: a young man on his knees
runs his fingers lightly down the ridges,
feeling roundworms in those lime-cast tunnels
thicker than his thumb.

Tooth entwined with bone entwined
with shell are bound together
in the dark of rock's hard time
until the hillside high above the creek
gives way, until the mountain breaks,
and ancient limestone bares its frozen moments
to the sunlight of our days,
while through the brilliant hollows
new waters scour and make clear
old time's shelled foundations.

Root Fence

Like the wreckage of mastodons
and mammoths, jumbled megatheriums
long unfleshed by time and wind and sun,
their bones heaped helter-skelter in the lurchings
of landscape toward geology,
my neighbor's strange fence—
roots of downed oak, beech, and poplar—
snags shadows in its wild confusions,
chiaroscuro uncertainties
on a simple hill in Ohio.

Nothing like it lines another place
around the county: split-rail, picket,
post-and-wire elsewhere reticulate the land
that wants to drop off toward its ancient sea-floors
but cannot for all their plotted holding.
Instead, shadows straight as chains or rods
benignly lie upon the timothy and oats,
shadows measured, safe as sills.
But the doors that plunge to
darkness throughout the root fence

Will not be entered safely. Humid
passages to regions previous and lost,
where toothed beasts large as sheds
thrust tusks and horns upwards through
a wilderness of soil, open everywhere
along its weed-shagged length.
It leaks a living dusk
more extensive than the night.
moon igniting dim mosaics
of hide, hoof, unblinking eye,
glintings of an old, neanderthalic ice.

But some are drawn to its tangled brooding
on the ridge, find something long forgotten
since the conquest of the land, the
quelling of old demons. Weary
of noon's unceasing brilliance, enslaved
to sunlight's trite productions,
they long for wildness never tamed,
for dark as deep as time,
so pass by here, alone, to glory, quiet,
in a kind of sacred terror, thinking
"It is right sometimes to draw
these things up from the dark,
to haunt the light."

Shore Glass, Cincinnati

Here the common river, clogged with
coal dust and the red-clay sand of brick,
low stones smeared with shad-silt,
perch-bladder, reeking skin of mudcat,
delivers its surprising jewels
to the battered concrete of its banks.

All day, boys come down
with sacks to glean
this treasure—
bromo bottles shattered
in the Pennsylvania uplands
then roared down-flood,
smoothed to deep sapphire
in the river's lapidary tumble;
Ohio bottle bottoms
shaped like Hopewell gods and totems;
jugs and moonshine jars
slivered like mica
in the wrack.

Watching these boys
intent in mud and stones,
I see an opal haze surround them,
see the instinct to collect
all that flashes, glitters,
gathers light to glinting,
curve in upon them like a lens
of Byzantine enamel,
and I think of bower birds
who set blue stones
among their chapels in the forest,
as if to make connect
the fury in their blood—
to court and mate,
to deck, dapple,
be dazzled by world's brilliance—
with the elegance of life,
the rich increase
of beauty's million species.

CHARLES HANSON

Lumen

1
An Ohio farmer
plows a pattern
across the landscape,
the upturned earth torn
like broken skin
with blue-violet depths.
In the valleys
the purple river weaves
among the folds of grass
and hybrid fruit trees,
creating a perfect arc
under coral sky.

2
Daybreak taps
with its golden leaves
against the window,
the pale rose sky pushing
against the frost.
Golden-laddered crystals
melt in the heat of sun;
a blue stream of light
flashes into the white room.

3
I lie down
in the autumn weeds,
my body holding
its separateness like a seed,
and stretch my arms out
in a cross beside the
umber shadow
of the mulberry tree.
I make my mark
upon the ground,
a stark line drawing
on wheat paper.

4
Night
pushes me forward
to merge with ghost and air
in a twilight dance.
My flesh is stonelike

against the stars,
my cool shoulders imprinted
on the bronze dust.
I design my sleep
from the scarlet bouquet
of evening light.

Winter Wine

All winter we fought the cold.
Indoors, we baked bread and sorted
the golden lentils, drinking winter wine
that left a summer flavor in our throats.

In the unbearably white landscape
we watched the thin frost on the window,
the candles dying in their roots,
our heads resting on hot pillows.

First we read Hamlet, then Macbeth,
and tasted three drops of blood within the wine.
We thought: what could betray us now, the snow
waist-deep, the cold earth unburdening the sky?

We drank iced wine beneath our frozen roof,
your eyes glinting like a mirror of ice.
We made love again as in love's first day,
reaching out to feel the scattering of snow.

DONALD M. HASSLER

Sonnet for a New Residential Circle
Kent, Ohio 1967

Like contented squaws squatting in a ring
Our burgeoning bungalows have grown each year.
We've gas, and soon the sewers will appear.
In short, we do not want for anything.
We go to church more often in the spring
And in the summer to the beach. We hear
Monotonously of births. In fact, I fear
Our lives are one continual circling.
But where else could we settle? Hart Crane's sea
Is cruel, not only at the bottom, and to burn
With the windy tumult of Antigone
Is equally destructive. No, the hero's fate
Is not for us who come too timid and too late
Who, living on circles, venture only to return.

JEFFREY HILLARD

River Road

Most nights this road's frontyard is a shifty, brooding face.
Gaunt, not likely to give in, this river charms the usual outgoing stars
to stare down at it; and the reflection of that starlight —
in its persistence — is what we see the river break
into pieces. Soon, it seems another land in itself:
successive dark knolls, parted by puddles of light, that arc out of view.

On the river's one side, light is feasting
in houses that must regard it as some poor, useless land:
they lean, as if concerned. Until morning,
crossing over on the ferry, fog could well be first light
gauze-like above the road whose ending eludes even the city.
Alongside, houses are strung with laundry flapping like stadium pennants.

Little distance between, most families know one another,
or why the cause to live here is as unanswerable as death.
Like coats of paint over years, tradition wears through the thinnest
dreams here: fathers, their sons always respond to the cool draft
in the evening, shirtless. This afternoon, though, several women
gather on a porch to hear of a daughter's rape. The girl,

flimsy skirt and high heels, was mistaken for a prostitute;
after the suspected act, attempted to run home through heavy traffic
and was struck down. In minutes the neighbor's porch swells,
the side gate opens and slams from gusts of passing trucks.
And for another quarter, the ferry takes you back, away — supposedly.
Where midway a coal barge flails the sky with gray exhaust,

the shadows of houses and the road wilt against the river's edge.
Off to a side you manage to see a fat man walk
into his backyard holding a mug. He flings his last warm beer
toward an embankment already sucked into the river.
Behind him stands his wife, hand to forehead.
She is not waving goodbye.

MARIANN HOFER

Fall in Reily, Ohio

The maples glow with the yellow
of a carnival tent at the county fair,
and drop their leaves just as the farmer's son
drops the cornsilk cigarette from his fingers,
choking behind the barn, the ground
littered with cornsilk and husks.

Three miles outside town, bark peels
from the scarred branches of the beech,
creamy white beside the barn
that kneels in the weeds, thistles banging
swollen heads against the wall
like children throwing tantrums.

Old men, their farms divided
and sold for a good price, collecting
Social Security and war pensions, sit
on tilted porches in metal rockers, the paint
flaking as they rock, cordwood stacked
to the second-floor window.

At night the wind gusts through town, the leaves
swirl like small bones in a whirlpool, and the old men
turn over under their blankets and keep on dreaming
in black-and-white.

DAVID BRENDAN HOPES

A Malediction
after James Wright

Just off the highway to Aurora, Ohio,
Twilight bounds softly forth on the grass.
And the eyes of those two highway patrolmen
Darken with satisfaction.
They have come gladly out of the speedtrap
To ticket my car and me.
I step out of the car onto the berm
Where they have been abiding all day, bored.
They swagger fatly, they can hardly contain their happiness
That we have come.
They pull ticket books from their pockets. They love it.
There is no authority like theirs.
Satisfied once more,
They begin writing the details in the darkness.
I would like to punch the fatter one in the face,
For he has waddled over to me
and leaned against my side-view mirror.
He is pink and pimpled,
His hat falls dumb on his forehead.
And the revolving lights move over his form
That is as delicate as a beached sea-cow, sweating.
Suddenly I realize
That if he stepped back two inches he would be
Smashed into the pavement by a Peterbilt.

Running Route 700, Hiram, Ohio

Slowing home I met the light.
Whatever before I thought the light was,
he was greened and frilled then
passing through the trees.
He was body immense and intimate,
leaning dusk, coaxing star in the farthest corner.
Light a stillness in that flood:
splendor of bluejay,
red ravel of sweetpea,
fir, stone, caught in clarity,
a robed-in-calm-flame-field,
I gathered to him on the field's edge;
so whole is the fire's consecration,
so slow is the rose of the ditch to open.

GLADYS McKEE IKER

Legend of Hanging Rock
(Allegheny Foothills)

Hanging Rock, Lawrence County, Ohio

There was a childhood summer
I played a game with a giant boulder
which hung over the roadway
on the hot spit of August, threatening
the small village that bore its name.

Legend had it that Daniel Boone
had tipped it almost over, swinging
from a grapevine, to escape a Miami war party
with scalping on its mind.

It was only when I was ten that I noticed
the Hanging Rock and fantasized a legend of my own,
pretending Indians still might shove it
onto the roadway below and smash us all
to smithereens, rumbling down each narrow street,
headed, I hoped toward the river where,
with one sky-shaking drop...PLOP...it would make waves
higher than mountains and the Ohio River
would leak through to China.

That was the summer I was ten when every shadow
on hillside or meadow took on a strange shape
and red the fantasy.

Later the Allegheny foothills' trees waved red and gold
Indian bonnets, the Hanging Rock stayed steady
into my eleventh year and I marched back to school
in autumn's apple-sweet air.

ELIZABETH ANN JAMES

Ida McKinley Speaks to Women's Studies 101
When They Meet for Conversation and Coffee

Upon my first gasp of his cigar smoke
I was overwhelmed. Later, I learned
to sustain myself in a profusion
of lilac talcum drifting in white silt ribbons
upon my bureau meticulously arranged
in cotillions: pin trays, abalone shells,
miniature dogs; and the Chief Executive's
photograph, manly, imposing, tinged even then
with the slight green of embalming fluid.
—I collapsed at the inaugural ball
and posterity exhumed the satin gown
showing a permanent stain, an arterial leakage.
—During my seizures I saw mourning frocks
writhe into cobras!

William would never admit to my condition,
an epileptic malaise, nevertheless
his eyes swam, and he pined for my affection
while I swooned
in an illness as delicious as roses.
Each evening, a back brace holding my vertebrae erect,
I sat at the window until *he* appeared.
waving his salute, a sedate pendulum.

Both of my babies died, and I learned
in the aftermaths of convulsions,
to sit quietly, to recall evening musicales
in Canton when both of us played,
Senator Hanna turning the pages.
That certain morning
I told the maid: "There is death
in the Hall of Music,
Close up the room at once."

You see I was trying to preserve
even the slightest aroma of El Producto.
For six years I waited to die.
There was nothing at all left to do,
not even fashion his bow ties,
flatten them, shape them,
the satin of my life.

Flood, Columbus, Ohio 1913
A Poem for Synthesizer and Piano

The rain descends, with the sound
of heavy weeping. . .The floors at the asylum
glisten, and the inmates slide, their gowns
billowing, like gray canvas. . .At the penitentiary
water the color of rust wells up in the drain holes,
the bricks leak, the guards in the tower
blow steam from their cigars. —Across Broad Street
in the telegraph office, the telegraph girl
hikes up her skirts. . .Heavier
than J. P. Morgan's heavy breathing, the rain
descends, bursting radiator pipes,
breaking off fire hydrants while firehouse dogs
swim desperately in whirlpools.

The bridge over the Scioto at Town Street
is swept away. —The Olentangy heaves
and gives birth to corpses, iron bed frames,
and tubs of potatoes. .Frantic women rise
from second floors, to third floors, to attics
where they put on overcoats and kneel in prayer:
"There were ninety and nine. . but none of the ransomed
ever knew, how deep were the waters they crossed."
The Dispatch Reporter sees thirteen people
clinging to the same tree. —In shipwrecked ballgowns
and drenched tuxedoes they cling,
Their fingers petrify, their eyes become lumps of ice
and still their mouths move: "Throw out the lifeline,
someone is sinking today."

A five year old girl and her cat
ride a cellar door over Sullivant Avenue.
The neighbors hear her call, "Jesus, Jesus,
come down, save me and kitty!"
A black man
jumps off the steps at the Spiritualist Church
and tries to save her and is drowned.
A policeman
jumps from the window above the yard goods store
and tries to save her and is drowned.
"Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!"
—The firefly voice vanishes
in a canyon of the storm, . . And the rain

continues to fall, no longer with the sound
of heavy weeping, but with the sound
of tears, the way the black poet, Dunbar,
heard the rain as angels' harp strings, or like the way
rain drips on black umbrellas at a hanging.
The girl at the telegraph office
begins to wear death casually, as perfume.
All day the reports come in: Dayton, Findlay,
Youngstown, Fremont, Cairo.

At six, she puts on the watchman's extra trousers
and, using a clothes rod for a balance pole,
steps through the open transom onto the freezing wires,
and walks safely home.

DIANE KENDIG

From the Terminal Tower

Lately places overlap in my memory
like the stripes in a mackerel sky,
the time between them, air, miles deep,
as invisible as never having existed.

I am standing in all the lookouts I have ever known:
my father lifts me up to this window in Cleveland
and a love points out Seville from the top of the Giralda
and alone above Niagara Falls I watch whirlpools form.

And the whole while, I am with my friends
who lingered in a fortress to watch sunset
and found themselves locked in the turret.

I'm at the end of a tangent, with snow falling
and all the color gone from a view where once even
the cars were primary red and blue and green as toys.
And all the neon pink clouds are blinking off, stacking up gray.

BETSY KENNEDY

Ohio Steeltown

The spark from fires in furnaces, sputters, spills
in air still raw with smoke. The men in town
begin to stir, as day shifts start at mills
where steel is king, where noise and heat pound, pound
incessantly against their brains. At noon,
they rest outside, while girls like kites on strings
flit by. The men enjoy flirtations, soon
wish more, but young girls dream of other things.
At nightfall, embers, red from ovens, glow,
and men in fitful sleep, seduced by pay
that bought their food, feel old. And their wives know
how steel takes youth so greedily away.
In Youngstown, life goes on, the dawn returns.
The never-ending fire continues, burns.

LOLETTE KUBY

Where (Rachel)

3206 East Oakview—the center.
The sun was formed
each morning
in the patch between Silvestro's chimney
and McMann's maple tree. Each night,
beyond the ring of Sycamores
at Forest Hills
the moon disappeared in the reservoir.
The ice man lived in his ice truck.
The postman paced off
the square footage of the universe.
I returned to renew my perspectives,
found fewer steps from the porch,
the kitchen escapable in two long strides,
ceilings too low for giants.
All, as expected, foreshortened,
tamed. Yet I know now for certain
this this is indeed the place
where Clytemnestra killed Agamemmon
and the rest of the trilogy began.

ROBERT G. LANZIT

The Bar at the Holiday Inn, Perrysburg, Ohio

Long lumpy, the red rail
This night and every night
Shined by elbows
Dug in to help
Outstare the bottles.

Slouched by the register,
A barmaid observes
Her private aquarium,
Schoolfish nearly motionless
But for the peculiar
Lip oscillations
"where ya from?"
"I gotta brother there."

Hardly the Houston
Petroleum Club
But it sure helps
Suck sand
Through the glass.

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.

JOEL LIPMAN

Along the Summer River

in my ears
tires sink into

iron mesh of the old
drawbridge

an aerial span
of high

white
and blue lights

along the summer river

the mourner's horn from
the low tug

runs
water

followed by
another

its twin line of
three amber lanterns

along the summer river

lovers
blend

into the public
promenade

and no one ever
catches fish

though I hold a
slippery stringer

along the summer river

and the mexican
woman in purple

cotton leans against
her line

in
brown water

asking
what's in it

along the summer river

a fat carp rolls over
and I watch

cranes raise pallets off
a freighter

that flies
no flag

when, rock & roll!
marijuana

along the summer river

howl four mad
warriors

from a silver
careening

outboard
canoe

and I
see

along the summer river

a thalidomide baby
grown up

fishing with
another

off the trunk of
a faded metallic turquoise

nova
I

look off
too

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 no
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.

HERBERT W. MARTIN

Reward Poster

I, William Burke, owner
Offer up to $150 dollars
To whoever finds and returns
HENRY MAY
About 22 yrs. old
Five feet eight
Chunky build
Impeccably neat
Bushy hair, combed
Parted with pride
Ordinary color
Ordinary man
Suspected running
Towards Ohio
Offer him no food or drink
No mountain, no cave,
No woods or house to take shelter in.
He is a first-rate servant
An ordinary man
Trying to make his escape.

HOWARD McCORD

Three Notes on Ohio

The Geography of Ohio

Ohio lies fifteen thousand fee below sea level in a great rift valley bisecting the western portion of the northeastern corridor. The border with Indiana is considered by some impassable, and by all as rivaled only by lunar structures of yet undetermined origin. A stone dropped from Pennsylvania does not land in Ohio, but Indiana, the prevailing upwardly westerlies prohibiting all but a few major airlines from landing anything in Ohio. Ohio is inhabited solely by *Mucor mucedo*, the common gray mold of bread, and is a very quiet state. Occasional utopian communities have attempted to lower themselves on ropes into Ohio, but there are always mutinies, and the ferocious free balloonists from Winnipeg steal the women with impunity. A scream was heard from Ohio in 1923.

A Ramble In Northwest Ohio

In the transition zone between the Findlay mangrove swamps and the dense bamboo thickets near the Michigan border lies Yore, Ohio. It is the only inhabited spot in the great twitchweed taiga. The miasmic fumes which rise from the decaying twitchweed engender in the inhabitants a continual inebriation and confusion (whence the quaint expression, "daze of Yore").

The twitchweed taiga supports little animal life. Most birds bypass the area; those attempting overflight generally succumb to the fumes. The pustulated carrion beetle, the black fly, and the false chinch bug are among the more common arthropods. The vast expanse of twitchweed which surrounds Yore is unequalled elsewhere in the hemisphere. Only a few hardy and noxious plants such as Jimson weed and Sowthistle can co-exist with it, and they are usually stunted.

Considerable research during this century has found no method to eradicate twitchweed, nor any use for it. Land taken over by twitchweed cannot be reclaimed. The plant is unpalatable to most domestic animals, and poisonous to those not offended by its taste. Strenuously resisting combustion, it apparently thrives on all known herbicides. Cut, it grows back denser, stronger, and invigorated. All botanical authorities agree that, though twitchweed is a most interesting plant, it is indeed fortunate for civilization that its range is limited to the taiga about Yore, for it is potentially a plant of catastrophic properties.

The pleasant and friendly citizens of Yore, numbering about fifteen (all census returns are admittedly incomplete) attribute their long lives, good humor, and genial insouciance to the beneficent effects of rotting twitchweed. Unfortunately, no satisfactory analysis of the gas produced has ever been made. Twitchweed rots and ferments all year, though it is August which the inhabitants of Yore call "bubble time." One well acclimatized to the odor (experienced fieldworkers hint this may take several years) can hike the twitchweed taiga and be surrounded by the soft popping of gas bubbles in the soil.

As in muskeg country, rubber boots are a must. A stout heart, a good machete, and a moisture-proof compass are also recommended. Identification should be carried, for personal use on return.

The Ethnology of Ohio

The tribes along the lower Sandusky are cannibalistic, those inhabiting the desolate area between the Cuyahoga and Tuscarawas subsist solely on a diet of tires, which they slice, grind, and bake into a filthy black paste which they age and eat with apparent gusto. They call themselves the Akrons, but this is much disputed. Northwestern Ohio is covered by a dense layer of earth mixed with a viscous secretion as yet unidentified, making travel most difficult. The few inhabitants of the region have no name for themselves, or anything else. They wander in small groups, moaning loudly, and are much feared. A significant group of rat worshippers dwell in the valley of Cincinnati, and the singular altars of the sect can be seen for miles. The Zints, as they are called, make a pretense of civilization, but their greatest contribution has been the domestication of moles for the growing of felt.

What Ohio Needs

Ohio needs three active volcances.
Ohio needs a seashore.
Part of Ohio should be jungle.
There should be lots
of action in Ohio, but
very few people — surfers,
poets, rock-climbers,
beautiful girls.
Ohio needs many undiscovered
caverns, and at least twenty
peaks over 5000 meters.
There should be no roads
in Ohio.
Ohio needs a fjord.
And at least two
distinct species
of wild horses
should live in Ohio.

The Duke of Chemical Birds

Canto I

Winsome, brindle widows
from the blue tombs of Pennsylvania
watch the Duke of Chemical Birds
fly the telluric clouds,
braving the thermals of Akron.

He wears his Parma socks,
he was born in Toledo
of graven images, and he
lusts in a latex suit.

The Duke of Chemical Birds
has a degree from Bowling

Green, and suffers fools gladly.
His eyes are onions hidden
in the shade, his mind
is a tree snapped by wind
in nineteen twenty three.

He dove in Lucky Quarry last
April only to see the buzzards
arrive in Hinkley on the bottom.
Two miles south of Clyde,
he knows the plug, which pulled,
will sink Ohio.

He is flying there, but stopped
by a scene in mezzotint: Gentlemen
taking the cure in Ashtabula;
Cleveland, from a dirigible,
burning.

The Duke of Chemical Birds
pulls at the plug.

***

Ohio now awaits the pox.
The land is wet and low and plowed.
The gentry wear their best silk suits,
women cross their words with knees.
The Duke of Chemical Birds
slides through the air, erect.
"The pox," he says in a dreadful
voice, "is seemly, but plum and pea
refuse to bear. I go
for aid, most circumspect."

Five hundred psychiatrists, fitted
with scarlet turtlenecks, march
into Ohio. Gulls stir the waters
of Erie, and the Shah of Iran
dreams of old coins, of the Lollypop
Kids, of the Duke of Chemical Birds
spinning like a camshaft in the soy-
bean fields.

The Psychiatrists make a pilot study:
"Ohio is nature's own aversion
therapy. We want out." But Ford

and Rockefeller have made a grant,
and they must stay till they plot and
graph the Duke of Chemical Birds
in melancholy, or catch a native
in an act of thought.

"Nulla die sine linea," they croak,
their notes grown dank and heavy
from Ohio's soil. The lake
laps at Columbus. The plug is
lost. The pox alone will never
save Ohio. The Duke of Chemical Birds
is now Ambassador, fitted in chartreuse
pink, and winging to the Vatican.

Ohio sinks.

Canto II

The Duke of Chemical Birds un-
zipped his blue feathers and streaked
through the President's Garden
at precisely six P.M.

The Dean intoned a Kurdish proverb,
tugged at his hem, and covered
his gibbous face with a black,
transparent veil.

Comparative anatomy was not
his forte.

After sunset in Ohio, men
cannot tell men from men.
And women have never been
known to care.

Ohio is an anamorphosis
of certain dreams — a two-
headed cuckold, spondaic sex, as
at a Maumee Bridge
there's one latrine that serves
and simply's marked
"Between."

Some days there is an
anapestic gist to screams

that echo from the place,
but they are tourists',
unaccustomed to sequestration
by necessity, rather than
by sex or race.

***

The Duke of Chemical Birds undoes
all this when he moults his clothes,
for he mounts a revolution.

"The Academic Party," his memorandum
states, "is like a pound of feathers
on the moon. It falls as fast
as lead, and makes no greater
boom. Naked, Ohio can
conquer all. Take off your
boots, and next your skin."
"Burn your degrees,
lest you burn by them."

"A bale of doctorates will roast
an ox —gored, or in a pit,
off or near— what I tell
you is precisely what you hear."

The faculty subscribes at $11.98
the pair. The Duke grows rich,
(he sells the skin at Texas Fairs),
and Ohio is alert for change:
For progress down an alley
in the dark, for spoons to rap
like castanets, for dogs to mew,
and cats to bark.

Canto III

The Duke of Chemical Birds
is inconclusive.
He reads French critics who
have an obsessive desire
to have nothing to say.

The Duke of Chemical Birds
advocates the pre-confusion
of ideas, and knows the

comprehensive development
of absence is Ohio.

Ideas are, like Beothuks,
extinct. One chooses
right without understanding
choice. Art is the apotheosis
of solitude.

With that, the Duke begins to
scream: "Reduce, reduce, Every-
thing we want is vacuum and
void, and will be found in
Cincinnati."

In a broken cup at the river's
edge, the scum afloat like Mu,
the larval stages of an epidemic
poem remind the Duke
of the lonely day he swam
the Cuyahoga. It was not clean.

Matted, sticky, and bilious
green, his feathers mirrored
every catastrophe he'd seen.

***

The dictionary is inoperative
in Cleveland. Twelve fathoms
down they're holding sales
of dunnage, copra, peat, and
Arizona real estate.

The bids are made in pfennings,
farthings, tubs of gin, sere
husks of willow bark. Each
trades to save the next one
from himself. No Ark appears
on Erie. Cold water's all
that's taken in.

The Duke of Chemical Birds
observes with satisfaction—
a prophet whose land has
drowned at his own instigation

will have credence
everywhere.

No more the blush of exile,
nor apologies for storms
that never came.

The Duke of Chemical Birds
has pulled the plug.
Ohio's sunk.
His fame is like a diamond
in the sun.

EXPLANATORY NOTES:

Parma socks are thin white socks worn with black shoes, a custom in Parma, Ohio, where the ruder mechanics often roll the socks down below the ankle bone.

Beothuks: a peaceful tribe, now extinct, which once inhabited Newfoundland, and encountered Norsemen in the Eleventh Century. No Beothuk was ever known to reside in Ohio.

ROBERT E. McDONOUGH

Storm on the River

Promised my son a Cuyahoga cruise:
bridges, mills, factories, etc.
I had it figured:
$4.25 for tickets, plus beer and soda.
Father showing son pollution compared to
father taking son fishing:
a poem on the death of nature
cheap at the price.

Up a darkening river
contempt seemed too simple.
The steel mill—furnace, chimney
thick twisting pipes—grew like a tree.
The lawn in front of the paint factory
was public relations.

The storm struck as we turned about.
Heavy, hanging rain did not blot the shore
but flattened it, joined us to it,
ship and shore contained by rain.
In the river's shelter we felt no threat,
just a slight roll,
admonitory nudge from a huge hand,
a reminder.

"Tribe Truck Leaves for Tucson"

The best dreams occur elsewhere
so we send out these men to plow
through the Midwest; bearing our hopes
in bats and balls, stopping each night
for women and drink, they take the news
from this weary city out into the desert—
that we mean to have spring again.

NICK MUSKA

Ohio Meltdown

Came the first Geeks to the Firelands!
The rejected many, traders, their squaws, slayers of red brethren,
religious kickouts, exploiters of virgin terrain.
Atavistic bloodpumps of the American Tradition
sluicing their streams into Canesadooharie, Olentangy,
Kokosing, Miami, Little Miami, Raccoon, Little Raccoon,
Tuscarawas, and Scioto; dumping springthawed iceblood
into Maumee; filling the main vein of the Water Father.
All spent their drop here!

Next, the Cincinnati cultured, white winegrowers and Jews:
Crazed Chataqua chatters mingling streams down by the Ohio.
The riverlit eyes of whitetrash rednecks boiling up
from poorman's Ky. and W. Va.
Then, a century's cities' brimful with Europe's backwaters!
Bohunks and Poles, Croats and Lats, Hunkies and Slavs
sloshing with Hillbillies, escaped Negroes; with Mexico's,
Puerto Rico's, and Sicily's runoff!
Steelmills, tools and dies, tractor factories up on their backs,
Planting the land silly with corn and with soy.

Progress! Teamwork! Baseball and football!
Mudhens, Indians, Browns and Redlegs!
Almost a concrete mile near Bellefontaine in 1891!
From sandstone dust quarries to sootsky cities
to atoms of heavy water —future generations powered
by this richly osterized blood, glowing eerily
in darkening grandfather night.

Ohioans! We all know what's round on both ends
And high where it counts. Though Midwesternly flat
Here, all melts down.

JOAN ROHR MYERS

Ohio Sunset

As light fades over Hardin County fields
an Amish farmer turns his face
glassy with sweat toward home.
At the fence line he strips off
his black hat and lets go
of the horse. Through the cottonwood's
flutter he sees a sky
red as the dress his woman
would wear if it weren't
such a sin.

JOE NAPORA

Circleville, Ohio

> *The great proper names used in America must commemorate things belonging to America* —Walt Whitman

A circle

A mis-directed act
of homage

or a whim
a land promoter's fancy. We wish
to say Speak
collective memory. Speak.
Look with the tribal eye.

I. I. Aye! Aye! An endless round.
To believe the best and be all
ways disappointed
annointed with duplicity. I want to say
ecce homo
and present to you a figure
of a man at peace
with himself in a square
in a circle
a figure from Leonardo
instead I say behold that man
who so pleasantly allows
his tongue to be stung
by a frenzy of hornets.

They
"...placed the 8-sided courthouse in the center."
Was this prescient?
That we now find ourselves

trapped
trapped in a lack
all roads lead to legalism
now (and Boone's ironic laughter
a legacy, cheated out of every acre
dead on his son-in-law's land). A circle

it comes to this it comes from this to this

Circleville
"The county seat of Pickaway county, takes its name
from the imposing earthworks which occupied the ground

on which the town is built."
Earthwork means Indian mound. What do we mean?

circle / Circe
a pig-sty
It should be so easy!

2 dots for breasts.
a circle.
bellybutton.
an empty head.
circle.
a sun sign.
measurer.
a moon.
luna luna
a woman a measure.

It becomes a pleasant game of words and all the while
the earth erodes from a man's greed pressing itself
out of space and time.

"The blank left by words wanted but unspoiled,
has sometimes an unameably putrid cadaverous
meaning. It talks louder than tongues." -- Walt Whitman

The trails led here. At one time. At many times.
"The Circleville works comprised a square enclosure
connected with a circular one by means of parallel
walls. The circular work was unique in comprising
two concentric circles separated by a moat. The
diameter of the circle was one thousand feet and the
side of the square nine hundred feet. Although this
important group is now mostly obliterated portions
of it are still pointed out to visitors...."

From where the whiteman would build more towns
North from Portsmouth up the Scioto
South from Delaware and Columbus down the Olentangy
From Mingo Town down the Darby
From the west through Pickawillany on the Miami and Urbana
East along the Tuscarawas from Gosh-gosh-ing and across the
Licking and across the Hocking
and from across the Ohio up the Muskingum
and arcing through Lancaster
and South from Gallipolis

all to Circleville
spokes to a wheel
a vortex and a void
possessing us
North of Chillicothe the great mound center

PAUL NELSON

By a River in Southern Ohio

Steam rises from the surface in ghost-smokes.
The bourbon current slows with cold. A heron is rigid,
a scientist picking along the bank.
A carp rolls, long as a brown boy studying the bottom,
nosing the paper drapery,
blinking at the flash of disposables among the rocks,
green with baby hair.

The air will freeze and be bright all day.
We will hustle from sun to shade and back,
see small birds walk upon the bordering skim
like ornaments reflected in a ghetto window, behind which
denizens starve and sleep, their brains seized,
their eyes cast in bronze.

Given light, these shun the nuance,
so fundamental is their need.
All the big rivers, every tributary, contain them,
mouthing their muddy thoughts and wild bibles.
It is a sin to net or spear them, so primitive a species.
They may be baited, hooked with tinsel lures, but,
beached, they gape and gasp as if to speak.
We throw them back. They are not good to eat.

GARY PACERNICK

Labor Day

Every Labor Day the two old guys trot out their flags
And hoist them up the poles toward the blue sky.
And the sun shines down brightly upon the drunks in the park.
And the Faulkner family has gone to Kentucky for the holiday.
And the fat lady her hair in pink curlers sits on her
porch bellowing Baptist spirituals.
And the whites of the houses are white and clean as eggshells.
And the Kroger store is dark and deserted.
And Tom, the neighborhood maniac, hops the bus to the
Ohio State Fair.

AMY PLYBON

Incubation

In spring we bring them,
Gentled in newspaper,
To a house hidden from the road,
To a dirty white house, to the eggman.
Squinting like a jeweller
Fondling a precious stone,
He turns them in the light.
The eggman sorts the barren
Or cold from the warm
Inlaid with brown blood on one end.

Twenty-one days and we return:
Lying in a wooden case,
We see a hundred solemn eggs
Laid out, lined up and labeled
Like a century of stones.
Whispering, he points
To our eggs and they quiver
As if some ghost were breathing
On them, and a web of cracks
Covers each inverted dome.

They are born slowly
As their alabaster shells
Wilt and break around
Each slimy crystal of blood
And bone clawing at its womb.
Then they peck at the last shreds
Of white membrane that cling
To them, and stand
Like fossils risen from the dead.

MAJ RAGAIN

Dudd Moodey

Dudd Moodey
lived every one of his thirty six years
logchained to his own back porch.
A man of faith,
he barked at stars,
was blocktoothed,
gatheaded and never tithed.
Christened in a gutter spout,
he blessed himself with his thumbs.
A yard man,
Moodey handdug his own dark grave
in the morning glories
and climbed.

My Good Dog Zachariah

My good dog Zachariah
died hard this winter of fevers
and yaw and is bundled in
an old tarp 'neath the wood floor.

Red Zack was a chicken killer
as soon as he got his teeth,
running them down
in a fury of blood and feathers.
It was mean work for a stout heart.
He broke a law which
protects the stupid from the quick.

My Grandma Totten put an end to it,
short of a twelve gauge,
by hanging a dead hen round his neck.
Zack dragged it for an August week.
He never killed again, never sucked eggs
or napped on a feather bed.

Didn't have to beat Zachariah
over the head with a board,
how loathing teaches courage,
hindrance the relish of freedom.
Stink is an argument
even the brickheaded understand.

Later on, Grandma tried the same lesson
on me, as I grew up,
strung my neck with beer bottles
old stockings and whorehouse menus.
It worked on Zack, not on me.
I buried them both
And I just stunk through it all,
Still do,
Wearing the collar.

K. K. RECTOR

Driving From Bowling Green to Springfield

I pass through the same town
seven times. Seven times
I smile at the bleached woman
rocking on her porch,
the paint cracked and peeling.
Watch the old men gather
at the Moonlight Inn
to drink beer from plastic cups
during lunch breaks at noon.

This is the town
where your grandpa can call the butcher
down on Miller Road
and tell him
"My granddaughter's on her way
and I forgot to tell her
to pick up a quarter pound
of Colby cheese."
And the butcher will know her
right off
by her mother's eyes
and father's coloring.

And he will tell her,
"I remember how your mother
used to come in this store
40 years ago,"
rubbing her nose on his clean windows.
And he'll smile
and wonder where the years have gone
tucking a loaf of his wife's
homemade, soft, white bread
under your arm
as you go.

BRIAN RICHARDS

local issues

robins egg blue egg
in the path ants in its
small sucked hole

second time this spring

dead mole summers sweet
decay already first
of may

ANN ROTH

Assuming There Is Such a Thing

In the woods, it's the tree tops
learn the wind. Wildflowers only guess.

West of the house dandelions go to seed.
And so come the bobolinks. They know when.

Kids tumble the lawn when supper's done.
Rabbits, a dog, six twining cats.

Sandburg believed contentment to be
the irreducible minimum of hankerings.

May day, a hot one. Garden grew an inch.
A bird whistles me down to the orchard.

The Pulse

June drop thins
the apples while I
lose myself in Roethke,
Snyder, Jung. The stir
of a story just beyond
consciousness.

Winds slight and variable
shifting scents. Without
sight I'd know what blooms:
multiflora, clover, the grapes
just ending.

The catalpa easing
into blossom, fluted bells.
The wild rose's fragile pink
every year of memory, vetch
purpling the banks. All
a matter of lifting
my eyes.

The speech of natural
objects, the silence.
Here I lie more than ever
aware of their numinous
presence. A reach past
nothingness,
a breath.

Going for Sap

Snow pools
in the slightest hollows
as earth harnesses
new warmth. Ground
breaks through
wherever it can. I lean
into the maple with brace
and bit, making the tap.
The first ooze comes,
bears the shavings
out. Drive in
the spile, hang
the pail, rejoice
as the rich run
begins. The year's first
harvest. A fine light
gently gathers.

LARRY SMITH

Oberlin

How many worlds fit within
this old liberal college town
where brick shops and arched facades
flood the square with sculpted light—
a Florence of the Midwest?

September's bright elite
will walk beneath these elms
thinking hard of quiet protest,
righting wrongs with old folk songs
and measured chamber music.

In the summer
they hire the townies to
be museum guards, sell bagels
in coffeeshops, scrub
the dormitory walls.

Before the Co-op Bookstore a basket
of books and sandals bake in August sun.

JANE SOMERVILLE

After the Death of a Friend

This woman is determined to be
happy. She is out early
while her garden is still cool
and damp. She dreams
deliberately, seeks a world
inside this one, full
of signs. She dreams
of the fields spread out across Ohio,
marked by rivers like tunnels
to another time, water full
of bending trees, full of light.

She finds the vine
that has curled all through the mint,
that has gripped the fragrant stems
so intimately.
The garden will have its way,
she thinks. Just so much pushing
you can do. Yes,
I've learned a few things.
But so late. Too late.

No no no, happy happy. Satisfied.
The birds jumping into the sky,
the book on the table,
the high wood fence, everything.
I wonder what it would be like,
she had asked her son,
to know you're going to die?
Like knowing you're going to live,
he said, only worse.

JOHN STICKNEY

The Liberation of Cleveland, Ohio

I was walking back to the office when Fidel pulled next to me in his silver Camaro. Since he wouldn't turn his head, I directed my remarks at his ever-present cigar. "I can't, they'll notice if I'm gone too long. It's work. Besides, I promised I'd go right home to help out. We have guests tonight. Maybe another time."

He pulled out his cigar, picked one or two pieces off his tongue and said, "Get in."

I did.

Tires screaming, we entered traffic.

He handed me a cigar, laughed as I bit off the end. Next came the bottle, and as I swallowed, a hit on the back. It tasted like 'Victory Gin'. The radio suddenly filled the car and the street around us with the Stones singing about "Puerto Rican girls who'll drive you crazy."

"We find some, si?"

I nodded, he laughed and handing the bottle back and forth, we headed deeper into the city, ready to harvest the fine sugarcane day.

LEWIS TURCO

The Trading Post

The Western Reserve, 19th Century

Out of the weather, in the first room,
there are knives, blades lying on shelves.
The glinting lamplight slices shadow.

The river passing over the stones of the valley
does not quench with its voices
the flame on the hearth nor the dark fire
of the beads looping the pegs of the wall.

Beyond the logs of the building and its fire
are the boles of the forest bearing firs,
leaves and needles green and sere,
drinking the sun or the sounds of footfall,
light and leather.

In the second room there is a pallet
of pelts and sticks; a musket
lies beside it, its iron rusting.

The air is drowsy with musk and leather —
the animals lie flat or curl in bales
as though listening to the river, or the fire
among the beads and knives,
steel jaws and powder horns.

But the forest lies waking
beyond this frame of logs hewn
in the clearing against the river.
The animals wake listening
for fire and knives and the dark weather.

WILLIAM J. VERNON

Dayton

In my town, people still stare at birds
and see angels, imagine they can flatten
their arms into wings, splay out their
legs and stabilize flight. Jogging,
they feel their soles leave the earth and
then wonder if, touching down, they won't
have reached farther than man ever has.
There's a history of such thinking here.
At parties, people still cluster in
kitchens, speaking in angry, awed tones
of the hangar on base where the Air Force
secretly guards bodies of little green
men, killed on a mission from some other
planet. Old timers claim the carp leap
in the river to test how their fins are
evolving. In March, stores sell out of
kites. At games, fans study arc, spiral,
and spin, then argue about the dynamics
of curving. Hang gliders have to be
banned from tops of tall buildings. Sky
divers aim for the large X of flowers
planted in parks. On Easter, the people
gather to witness the silent rising of
hot air balloons, swelling colored and
bright with the dawn, higher than trees,
lifting as slowly as mankind's grandest
ideas, drifting over a field of rapt faces.
No one scoffs at the dreamers, idly
surveying the space between river and sun,
bicycles lying beside them, watching
hawks wheel and hover at Pinnacle Hill.

JIM VILLANI

The Vegetable Man

Every Thursday I watch for the vegetable truck,
Coming quietly to a stop, graciously hugging the curb.
A cow bell rings out and Mom puts down her mop,
Gathers up her change purse.

The vegetable truck is big and fire-engine red,
but all wooden like a train caboose.
I climb on up front like a schoolbus,
And when I walk down the aisle both sides are
Bins and shelves full of fresh fruits and vegetables—
Onions, cabbage, celery, lettuce, apples—
Everything Mom needs and delicacies unknown to me.
At the end of the long aisle a clock-like scale
Hangs by a hook with three thin chains wired
To an aluminum basket. The vegetable man leans
Against a raw counter, not tall and a little puffed out,
Putting Mrs. Umbert's potatoes in the bin.
I watch the dial flip around, settling at 4 1/2.
The vegetable man carefully selects two Idahos,
And the dial slips firmly to five.
He tips the tray into a brown bag,
And the needle whips back faster than my eyes.

Once, I remember, he offered me a peach.

The vegetable men have all died away;
They have given up their skins and their seeds.
All across America the vegetable trucks lie abandoned,
Splintering in junkyards and country fields,
Dismantled and rotting, grown-over with weeds
And the spores of vegetable ghosts.
From time to time an old seed sprouts
And a wild garden springs up to cleanse
The faded 2x4's and enameled sheeting,
The crumpled vines of a stubborn zucchini
Or a wild watermelon with its pump fruit—
ghostly ripe and delicious.

Even now, in the summer I go and look for them.

F. KEITH WAHLE

A Small Town

a small town is unimaginable to me
—the creeks and rock gardens,
apples hanging like bells on the trees

give me Cincinnati, the city that I love
where the air smells like fresh haircuts
and you're never far from a movie

buses go crashing down the street
and the stop signs clang like sloppy anchors
while snowflakes fall around our ears like sparks

The Indian Mound

From on top you might think it's just a hill.
But stand away a little and see how it rises
with no logic out of the landscape, grassy,
with a path up one side where hikers climb.
Some tall, straight beech trees grow around
its side, two or three feet up from the base.
These trees are maybe a hundred years old.
The mound has been here twenty times as long.

These were the Adena people, their burial ground,
who had just begun to make pottery, who made
their tools from bone and flint, and tied
their infants to boards to produce the
favored flattening at the back of their heads.
In their time was the Roman Empire, and in
China, the great Han Dynasty, and wandering
by a sea edge in the Middle East, a man named Jesus.

We sit cross-legged at the top, chatting
with the red-haired girl in the state park uniform.
There are no plans to excavate this site,
and we have no idea how many natives are
laid in the ground we sit on. The sun is out.
Some of the walkers in the group make jokes.
We like this place. It interests us.
Intruders, we can never know how sacred it is.

JENNIFER WELCH

Sunday Morning: Dublin Drive in Flea Market

All the rough-faced old puffers congregate
at some codger's tailgate. Ed Johnson from
Marengo smirks over his 1945 Tennessee banjo.
The men around him feel their rifle stocks to
the beat of their memories (Rev. Murray's
daughter danced at the Brass Rail in
Norwood in 1939).

Seventh-hand men sell their silver razors to
the Norelco crowd, walnut smoking stands to
the after church bunch of Christian Scientists
to paint blue and store their guest towels in.

These are the real curators—their pockets
mini-museums—each man with at least one
10-power hand lens, a "steal-of-a deal" from
set-up time, 4-dollars in quarters (some of
them silver), 2 knives (one with an ivory
handle), and a railroad watch.

Their sheet music never blows away. They
really know how to tie things down. Their wives
wait home peeling apples. Their tables remain
secure in Apostolic winds. "Jesus Christ"
(they swear they know him) that pink
Depression glass has had its share of grace.

WILL WELLS

Troy, Ohio

My father built dream
houses on scratch pads,
piled high on his desk.

Mother hated a mess.
She must have been Greek.
She burned his secret city.

He sold shoes that year.
It was only a job,
but he gave his customer

a good fit: enough room
for the toes, arch support,
"a home for each foot."

Who is ever that lucky?
I carry him with me.
I am my father's house.

Cicada Husk On A Fencepost

I. I sing the breaking out,
the locust one skin closer

to the core, throbbing,
it seems, more sweetly,
till its new shell hardens.

II. Like a hole in the light,
a speck troubles my vision;

it's the universe
ready to take me in
as soon as I shut my eyes.

III. The sun fits us all
with shadows, shadow lives.

I must settle for dusk:
this straining to hear
insects unzipping the air.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

MICHAEL ALLEN grew up in Cincinnati and is currently director of the Reading and Writing Center at The College of Wooster and editor of *The Wooster Review*. He is the author of *We Are Called Human: The Poetry of Richard Hugo* (Arkansas, 1982), and his poems have appeared in *College English, The North American Review* and *Prairie Schooner*.

TOM BARDEN is co-editor of *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-slaves* (Indiana University Press). He teaches literature, writing and folklore at the University of Toledo.

CAROL JENE BEEBE lives in Columbus.

JOHN M. BENNETT, a poet and word artist, edits *Lound and Found Times,* an avant-garde writing and art magazine, and is head of Luna Bistonte Prods, producer of books and poetry products. Born in Chicago, he now works and sleeps in Columbus. "No Boy" was first published in *Pudding.*

PAUL BENNETT was born in Gnadenhutten, and educated at Ohio University and Harvard. A professional gardener and orchardist who has written fiction, poetry and also film scripts, he has held a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship. Since 1947 he has taught at Denison University where he holds the Burke Chair of English. "An Amish Sketch" first appeared in *The Centennial Review.*

ROY BENTLEY lives in Athens. His work has appeared in *The Chariton Review* and *The Ohio Review.* "33 South" was first published in *The Chariton Review.*

MICHELLE BOISSEAU was born and raised in Cincinnati. Her poems have appeared in *The Georgia Review, The Missouri Review* and *The Ohio Review.*

IMOGENE L. BOLLS teaches English at Wittenberg University.

GLENN BROOKE, of New England, West Virginia, is a graduate student in biochemistry.

JOSEPH BRUCHAC, editor of *The Greenfield Review,* lives in Greenfield Center, New York. His work has been widely published. "Fallen Timbers" appeared previously in *Convergence.*

CAROL CAVALLARO has studied in France and at the University of Exeter, England, and she holds degrees from Wittenberg University and O.S.U. She lives in Upper Arlington with her husband, Gordon Grigsby, and their son, Andrew. "Visited" was first published in *Chelsea.*

DeWITT CLINTON teaches at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. He got to know Ohio while attending Bowling Green State University. "Kansas Iowa Ohio" was first published in *Chouteau Review,* and "Poem: Fake Walk" in *Itinerary 2: Poetry.*

MARY CROW, an identical twin and one of eight children, was born and reared in Loudonville. Teaching now at Colorado State University, she is a recent recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts poetry award.

JIM DANIELS, a graduate of Bowling Green State University, is currently Writer in Residence at Carnegie-Mellon University. He has had work in *Carolina Quarterly, New Letters* and *Paris Review,* and his *On The Line* won the Signpost Press Chapbook Contest in 1981.

PETER DESY teaches in the English Department of Ohio University in Lancaster. His poems have been published in *Descant, Poetry East* and *Sou'wester.* "Leaving Columbus, Ohio, November, 1982" first appeared in *The Devil's Millhopper.*

SALLY ANN DRUCKER teaches English at Youngstown State University.

JOHN D. ENGLE, JR., a retired high school teacher, has had many poems published around the country. He is an active member of the Verse Writers' Guild of Ohio. "August Ohio" first appeared in *Buckeye Farm News.*

JENNIFER PIERCE EYEN was born in Steubenville and spent her childhood along the Ohio River. Her grandfather was a lockmaster on Lock 11 dam for many years. She is a graduate of Muskingum College.

ROBERT FLANAGAN teaches at Ohio Wesleyan University. He is the author of a novel, *Maggot.* "Indian Summer" and "Possum" are from his book of poems, *The Full Round* (Fiddlehead Books, University of New Brunswick).

ROBERT FOX is Writer in Residence for The Ohio Arts Council. A resident of Pomeroy, he is head of Carpenter Press.

ELTON GLASER teaches at the University of Akron. His book of poems, *Relics,* is due soon from Wesleyan University Press, and he is a recent recipient of fellowships from The Ohio Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

MARILYN GRAVETT lives in Bowling Green and is associate editor of *Mid-American Review.*

GORDON GRIGSBY is the author of *Tornado Watch* (O.S.U., 1980), winner of the Dasher Award of the College English Association of Ohio for 1980. His chapbook, *Mid-Ohio Elegies,* is due soon from Logan Elm Press. He lives in Upper Arlington with his wife, Carol Cavallaro, and their son, Andrew.

RICHARD HAGUE, born in Steubenville, has lived for several summers on Greenbriar Ridge, in Ohio's Monroe County. Chairman of the English Department at Purcell Marion High School in Cincinnati, he has had a book of poems, *Ripening,* published recently by O.S.U. Press.

CHARLES HANSON is Head Librarian/Assistant Professor at O.S.U. at Lima. His poems have appeared in several magazines. "Winter Wine" first appeared in *Passages North,* and "Lumen" in *The Old Red Kimono.* He lives in Findlay.

DONALD M. HASSLER was born in Akron and now teaches at Kent State University. "Sonnet for a New Residential Circle, Kent, Ohio, 1967" was published by Ashland Poetry Press.

JEFFREY HILLARD, originally from Cincinnati, is now a graduate student in the

Creative Writing Department at the University of Colorado. "River Road" first appeared in *The Slackwater Review.*

MARIANN HOFER has lived all her life in Ohio. Currently an instructor at Bowling Green State University, she is an associate editor of *Mid-American Review.* "Fall in Reily, Ohio" was first published in *Wind Magazine.*

DAVID BRENDAN HOPES teaches at the University of North Carolina, Asheville, and lives on a mountain above Hominy Valley. He was born in Akron and taught for a time at Hiram College. "Running Route 700" first appeared in *Calliope,* and "Malediction" in *The Windless Orchard.*

GLADYS McKEE IKER has been widely published for several years and has appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post, Good Housekeeping, Ladies' Home Journal,* and *The New York Times.*

ELIZABETH ANN JAMES is Writer in Residence for the Public Libraries of Columbus and Franklin County. "Ida McKinley Speaks..." was published in the *Columbus Displatch,* and "Floods, Columbus, Ohio, 1913" in *Hiram Poetry Review.*

DIANE KENDIG was born and raised in Canton and now lives in Cleveland. "From the Terminal Tower" is from her chapbook, *A Tunnel of Flute Song.*

BETSY KENNEDY, a graduate of O.S.U., lives in Columbus. She is married and the mother of two grown children.

LOLETTE KUBY lives in Willoughby Hills. "Where (Rachel)" appeared in *In Enormous Water* (Cleveland State University Poetry Center, 1981).

ROBERT G. LANZIT, of Cincinnati, is sixty-seven years old. He makes his living as a manufacturer's representative, selling engineered components to makers of industrial equipment. He is married and the father of twin boys. "The Bar at the Holiday Inn, Perrysburg, Ohio" first appeared in *Clifton Magazine.*

EDWARD LENSE holds the Ph.D. in English from O.S.U. and teaches at Columbus College of Art and Design. He has a chapbook, *Buried Voices,* published by Logan Elm Press. "The Ohio Soil" was first published in *Road Apple Review,* and "Evening in Parma, Ohio" in *Cornfield Review.*

JOEL LIPMAN teaches at the University of Toledo. "Along the Summer River" is from his book *Mercury Vapor Lamp* (Ocooch Mountain Press).

GEORGE LOONEY was born in Cincinnati and is completing an MFA in Creative Writing from Bowling Green. He is poetry editor of *Mid-American Review.* "Missing" was published originally in the Chester H. Jones Foundation's *National Poetry Competition Winners,* 1983.

HERBERT W. MARTIN teaches at the University of Dayton. Poetry editor of *The Great Lakes Review,* he is author of *Paul Laurence Dunbar: A Singer of Songs.* "Reward Poster" first appeared in *Waves.*

HOWARD McCORD was born in Texas and has worked in Ohio since 1971. His

most recent books are *Jennifer* (Salt Works Press) and *Walking Edges: A Book of Obsessional Texts* (Raincrow Press). "Three Notes on Ohio" was first published in his book *The Great Toad Hunt* (Crossing Press).

ROBERT E. McDONOUGH lives in Cleveland Heights. "Storm on the River" appeared in *The Gamut.*

NICK MUSKA is a Lorain native who, after a fifteen-year peregrination, has settled in Toledo where he coordinates the Toledo Poets Center. His "Ohio Meltdown" is from his parodies of Ohio Poetry Day contests. The poem is, in his words, "a kind of Whitmanesque reverie in the Sandburgian vein."

JOAN ROHR MYERS is originally from Cleveland, grew up in Marysville, and attended O.S.U., St. Louis University, and Marquette University. She lives and teaches now in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Three of her plays have been broadcast over the Wisconsin Public Radio network.

JOE NAPORA lives in Oxford. His latest books are *Walam Olum*, his translation of the Delaware Indian pictograph epic poem, and *The Name Book*, both by The Landlocked Press. "Circleville, Ohio" first appeared in *Convergence.*

PAUL NELSON directs the Creative Writing Program at Ohio University. "By a River in Southern Ohio" is from his *Days Off* 1981 Associated Writing Programs Series Award for Poetry, published by the University Press of Virginia.

GARY PACERNICK teaches at Wright State University, where he edits *Images.* "Labor Day" was first published in *Choice.*

AMY PLYBON is a student at Miami University.

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JANE SOMERVILLE lives in Marietta and edits *Gambit,* a regional journal of the Mid-Ohio Valley.

JOHN STICKNEY lives in Fairview Park and is this year's editor of the *Poets' League of Greater Cleveland Newsletter.*

LEWIS TURCO taught at Fenn College, now Cleveland State University, in the early 1960's, and was the founding director of the C.S.U. Poetry Center. Since 1965 he has taught at the State University of New York College at Oswego, where he is professor of English and director of the Program in Writing Arts. "The Trading Post" is from his most recent book, *American Still Lifes* (Mathom, 1981).

WILLIAM J. VERNON is a resident of Dayton, an ex-Marine and the father of a daughter. Samisdat Press has published two chapbooks of his poetry, *To a Friend* and *Praising the Sand.*

JIM VILLANI directs Pig Iron Press. "The Vegetable Man" is, he writes, "a meditation/ reflection based on a persistent memory from my days of growing up in the suburbs of Youngstown in the 1950's."

F. KEITH WAHLE was born in Cincinnati where he now lives. He received an MFA from the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop in 1974. "A Small Town" originally appeared in *The Precious Dead,* published by *The Windless Orchard.* "The Indian Mound" was originally published as a broadside by The Arts Consortium.

JENNIFER WELCH is editor of Pudding Magazine and Publications and directs the Ohio Poetry Therapy Center and Library. "Sunday Morning: Dublin Drive In Flea Market" first appeared in *Pteranodon.*

WILL WELLS teaches at Lima Technical College. "Cicada Husk on a Fencepost" first appeared in *Southern Poetry Review,* and "Troy, Ohio" in *Poetry Northwest.*

Poetry Ohio *Art of the State:*
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