

**d steven conkle**

*along Ohio Rt. 4  
for Keith Orts*

behind me in colerain  
rises "quaker acres"  
the mansion of the man  
who built the constitution  
and got thrown out  
by his friends

over the ridgetop  
the played out strip mines  
brood in these hills  
like chickless hens  
clucking for the pick  
and thirsty for the salt  
of sweat and blood

across the valley  
"two chimneys"  
the palace of the prosperous  
publisher of  
the times-leader  
stretches its lazy  
manicured lawns  
and yawns  
a peaceful yellow indolence  
into the air

while in the cemetery  
over the hill  
Richard Nixon's  
great grandfather  
lies in the earth  
like a promise

but since all of this  
is known and will be known  
i'll leave this note  
for some future man  
who  
sifting through the ruins  
may know  
that on down  
this road  
is florence  
where the red river  
of glen's run  
runs hissing into the ohio  
and where there  
is nothing  
among the clapboard shacks  
and broken lives  
that speaks of flowers

except

a tiny black boy  
#12  
dressed in a miniature football uniform  
who hurtles across his dirt  
front lawn  
tackling  
in terror  
his scottish  
terrier