

## WILLIAM K. BOTTORFF

### *A Faded Time*

*(Toledo, Palmwood Avenue near Lawrence, 1941)*

Blue and shaded hazy nights—we  
Used to play the childish game of Hide and  
Seek. A turn at It—a hundred all alone when  
Sounds and scents would hover  
(Never sights at any length — I couldn't  
See the others in the mint bush, by the roses,  
Near the fence that pinched us in the play yard).  
I heard the sparrows, sounds of sparrows,  
Seep-seeping tiny echoes, rarely  
Seeing feathered real birds patting,  
Washing on the dusty bricks as  
Street birds always do in dryness.  
I sensed a gliding smoke, a  
City wood-fire kept by neighbors  
Down the block (for they burned branches  
Nights in stoves while we had  
Coal I'd hate to carry up from the  
Alley shed to trip on stairs forever  
Unredressed in darkness).  
I felt the dampness darkly  
On my skin the way it was alone in Fall,  
Heard the city willow as it whispered my name,  
Smelled late roses, mint, smoke, heard laughter —  
Those faded sounds and faded scents that  
Make my faded feelings make me want to  
Cry and cry the all-all-in-free.