



PROPERTY LINES

When our blue bicycles circle out of wind,
Sally and I crouch at sunset
resting hipbones on gravel.
Above the pieces of sun on green stems,
the last birds pass, feathers clicking
like cards we pinned to our two-wheelers.

A birch tree grows between our houses
sending spokes into Sally's sky
spinning shadows along my lawn.
"My tree" she says. I say "It's mine."
Stars scatter on the sky like jacks.

From bedroom windows we see each other through birch
while branches and shadows ride into night.
We watch the far up slow roll of a plane.
The sky has no corners to catch it.

Safe among blankets and pillows
our fingers and toes reach down into sleep;
white sheets circle our backs like bark.

— DIANE AVERILL



LA COLOMBE

When tears want to emerge from the pits where
your eyes used to be,
When your face is mutilated by the wounds
of explosions,
When your hair is singed by the fire of
other men's hate,
When consciousness gyrates with blackness
and dust,
Won't I still be true?
Affirmed, we'll stay alive (or dead) cornily
together
And I will stay alive (or dead) trying to
Keep you alive —
You, Peace
You white dove
You rusty ideal
You impossible rainbow
You and I are the children of war.

— JULIE GIBSON (Age 14)



"About mid-February, the red squirrels' nut store ran out, and she left him. Then we had this terrible snowstorm and that dumb little spotted fawn got lost and—oh, yes, there was an awful row between owl and fox. It seems beaver told fox that owl said . . ."

SEA IN SPRING

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— MICHIO MIYAGI
Written for koto
and presented in
Japanese musical notation



EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

The Attorney General has established an "early warning system", doubtless utilizing computerized technology such as that supplied by the United States to South Africa, which keeps a huge Black majority "in their place".

It will speed the armed might of police and military forces to any locality where desperately poor and unemployed citizens, trapped in festering centers of urban decay, dare to protest the life-threatening cuts in income and services that have been thrust upon them.

With the endorsement of the Moral Majority the Senate Judiciary Committee on Security and Terrorism, inheritors of the mantle and mission of the infamous HUAC will keep watch over "Communist" activities and social unrest.

As the storm clouds of nuclear war loom ever more menacingly over us all, the emergence of a new American police state becomes daily more certain.

— MARY JANE BREWSTER



COUNTRY FUNERAL

Now the old ways that have brought us farther than we remember sink out of sight as under the treading of many strangers ignorant of landmarks. Only once in a while they are cast clear again upon the mind as at a country funeral where, amid the soft lights and hothouse flowers, the expensive solemnity of experts, notes of a polite musician, persist the usages of old neighborhood, the community of knowing in common. Old friends and kinsmen come and stand and speak, knowing the extremity they have come to, one of their own bearing into the earth the last of his light, his darkness the sun's definitive mark. They stand and think as they stood and thought when even the gods were different. And the organ music, though decorous as for somebody else's grief, has its source in the outcry of pain and hope in log churches, and on naked hillsides by the open grave, eastward in mountain passes, in tidelands, and across the sea. How long a time? Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide my self in Thee. They came, once in time, in simple loyalty to their dead, and returned to the world. The fields and the work remained to be returned to. Now the entrance of one of the old ones into the Rock too often means a lifework perished from the land without inheritor, and the field goes wild and the house sits and stares. Or it passes at cash value into the hands of strangers. Now the old dead wait in the open coffin for the blood kin to gather, to come home, perhaps for one last time, to hear old men whose tongues bear an essential topography speak memories doomed to die. But our memory of ourselves, generation after generation, upon this land, hard earned, is one of the land's seeds, as a seed is the memory of the life of its kind in its place, to pass on into life the knowledge of what has died. What we owe the future the past, the long knowledge that is the potency of time to come. That makes of a man's grave a rich furrow. The community of knowing in common is the seed of our life in this place. There is not only no better possibility, there is no other possibility, except for chaos and darkness, the terrible ground of the only possible new start. Through all the changes the real alternative has never been an other community, but only a better one, one more careful of itself and of its earth. And so as the old die and the young depart, where shall a man go who keeps the memories of the dead, except home again, as one would go back after a burial, faithful to the fields, lest the dead die a second and more final death.

— WENDELL BERRY

THERE ARE MORE ORPHANS ALIVE IN THE WORLD THAN AT ANY PREVIOUS TIME

You are sad because they abandon you and you have not fallen. How many eyeless statues can be fit into one spine? What the words say does not last. Only the words last and what they are is always the same, what they say never the same or could get even bleaker. Always it is easier for one hand to clap than it is for one eye to weep. Only you know. They don't know. Either it satisfies or it doesn't, but who is to be satisfied first? Pilgrim, either you find out or you don't.

— JOHN BUCKLEY