

## HER SEARCH

--for Zelda

Driving in Montford,  
I feel her presence;  
Often sense her frantic call  
screaming at the fiery wall  
strangling life from nine patients.

Always, I feel sad.

In the charred remains,  
all that remained--  
the red slipper—

Told us she had died  
one night in Asheville.

No wonder I feel sad.

Told us it was her,  
the dancer, the prancer  
through Paris Jazz Age nights;  
The painter, the writer,  
the lover of life.

Had she also been sad?

This patient lover played games  
at times on the hospital lawn,  
but sat most times  
on the hill all alone  
as if searching.

I have felt her sad search.

Her search for success  
to pirouette, to arabesque  
above the Jazz Age delight;  
To escape the duress  
of an Asheville fire one night.

## TOM NIGHTENGALE

Tom Nightengale lived in a two-room apartment at the end of the horse barn near the fair grounds track in Central City. His arthritis had tied him to a wheelchair, but Dad said in his younger days Tom was one of the best racers in the Midwest, preferring trotters, but driving the pacers as well.

We drove to see Tom for advice when Dad received his colors and started doing 'pick up' drives at Summer Sunday meets. Before we went out to Tom's apartment, we'd stop at the grocery store for a 99 cent six pack of Pabst Blue Ribbon, or, 'my medicine', as Tom would say, popping one open with his church key.

FOR WILLIAM STAFFORD

Lowering his standards  
is what Stafford did  
to write a poem every day,  
he said.

I wonder how we will know  
which Stafford poems,  
like poorly aged wine,  
rate *low*.

I mean, after the second glass,  
or the fifth poem,  
who knows?

The connoisseur, I suppose.  
Really?  
Not me.

## NORTH CAROLINA BUSH BEANS

My first two plantings  
of Bush Beans are up;  
two rows of the first,  
the second in one row.

Just like last year though  
I had to tie them to a pole.  
In Iowa, Bush beans were Bush  
Beans not Pole Beans.

I mean, I planted some Pole  
Beans here a couple years ago  
and thought they'd never stop  
climbing up my teepee pole.

Guess I won't be too flustered  
as long as they come on strong;  
You know, like gang busters.

## PINK SNOW

Walking Sophie our Havanese  
this morning, pink snow  
flakes seemed to blow  
from the neighbor's Dogwood,  
covering a large spot  
in the road and the sidewalk.

Winds blowing such pink snow  
are not uncommon down here  
this time of year.