

and as they led
each other to bed,
they left ajar
the door, and I
crept in, to lie
with the bone of a star.

-- Edsel Ford

Rogers, Arkansas

The Virtue Of Speed

Time has buried us
Before our time.

As running boys we sped
Across the gravel schoolyard
With such free and faultless strides
Our legs snapped up tightly
Against us from behind.
Speed was good
When cinders flew before
And rolled so much under foot
That only our speed
Kept us from skinning
Shin and shank and palms
In the sharp and bitter gravel.
And once across the yard
We landed in the soft grass
Where delight at shooting dust
Became a cool and easy bounce
In deep green.

But there were always those
Who came behind --
Not whirling speedsters
But gallant boys whom no one loved.
They came jogging up,
Their large chests heaving,
Their noses underlined by red,
Their eyes -- with tears of strain
Squeezing in the corners --

Bright with the expectation
Of joining our games.

But they were too slow;
Youth respects only speed.
We left them standing in the grass
Amazed at their own lack of virtue.
(Somehow we were not ashamed!)

But now that speed
Seems not such a virtue,
We wonder about the big-chested boys
Who were slow afoot,
And we would like to see them
Come thumping up and look at us
As though we had just come
Sprinting across the yard.
We would like to ask them
To let us join their game.
But we went too fast for them.
We'll have to wait
Twelve years after death
For them to catch up
So we can ask them.

-- Robert Lewis Weeks

Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Heaven Was A Dream I Had

When I awoke my father smiled;
I had come home
from a personal round-about
to smell his world again.

His eyes were red; he knew I knew
that this return
was a chance to repeat goodbyes
before the final stop.

And I look back in silence now;
his time-slashed face
turns alone in his private night,
but I can't touch his cheek.

-- Ottone M. Riccio

Belmont, Mass.