

Fire Wind

In dry September
the Santa Ana

makes dogs tremble
arsonists go mad
lovers bite in bed

at all hours
sirens howling
into the foothills

along the ridges
rows of hideous suns
at midnight

trees burst

insane deer
run with the horses.

-- V. H. Adair

Claremont, CA

King Herod's Day Parade

The candidates for office
the officers of order
the counselors and principals
the parents and the narks

marched past the newsmen
through broadcasting media
onto the playgrounds
into the parks.

They lined up the children
with the out-going fingers
the out-growing toes
and the noses keen

the up-stretching hopes .
the cowlicks and lovelocks.
And everything that stuck out
they cut off clean.

Getting By

-- for Harold Norse

No food for three
days, simple as that.
Soon
I'll haul my scoured ribs
past the final talons,
past Villon's wolf jaws
feasting on air,
past Vallejo's Paris days,
past Arab mouths
snapping the wind,
past what's good for you,
Appalachian tragedies,
eaglet faces torqued to the sky,
past saints who chose this route
this indignity, this simple third
or eighth or twenty-seventh day without food.
I could beg coins

or like Kafka's artist
charge admission,
I could minimize
bread alone,
I could stitch a life from this
or call it art. I
could haul my scoured ribs
past politics and find wine
in an empty belly's mockery
of government. I could side
with such romance
or really, I could tell you
that I live in Los Angeles
weigh two-thirty-five and just
shared a mushroom pizza
with a lady on Vermont Avenue.
We had five bottles of Bud
and now I'm going for some rum,
Bacardi light, with Coke and limes.
Cuba Libres. Sausages for breakfast.
Ah, my friend, did you really swallow
all that bitter deprivation?

At the Artiste Bar
the barmaid's mouth sets
against laughter, she
talks through her hands
and her quick fingertips
suture her smile --
she can't forget those missing teeth --

not even later, I wonder, her arms and legs
spidered over some guy's back
eyes wild or quiet in penetration
what shape has her mouth then?

-- Tony Quagliano

Los Angeles, CA

NOTICE:::NOTICE:::NOTICE:::NOTICE:::NOTICE:::NOTICE

In the last issue (Wormwood:40), the name of Ron Koertge was omitted (page 126) after the following poems:

"In The Hollywood Deli"

"The Burglar"

"Lazarus" and

"Lately" ... thus it appears that they were

authored by Gerald Locklin. Both poets have been exceptionally tolerant of the editor's error. We are re-running the mis-credited poems and adding three more inimitable Koertge poems. Turn the page: