

all the days are

all the days are
cold and short like rows
and rows of possum teeth.
the house is empty, even the
mountain air
refuses to come in
afraid of the stillness
i can sit at the kitchen table
for hours. the white
paint may be chipping
but the large vein
running through the middle of my
forehead is firm. i feel it
at my fingertips as i
work on crossword puzzles
having no squares.
it's good to know
a pack of hunting dogs were once
baffled by the stream out back.

-- Ronald Baatz

North Arlington NJ

As The World Turns

I missed my ten-year
reunion. But once
I went back
& saw this girl I wrote poems to
in study hall
& her husband.
They were steadies
in tenth grade
& never stopped.
We had coffee & talked
about things like his father's car,
how it used to burn rubber
when you floored it at 50.
About our friends
& where they were
& the camper-trailer he would buy
for their next vacation.

I stopped by the next day
to give them some poems
& she was there with the baby.

She didn't look right,
not the way I remembered
her belly too big
in department store slacks,
her bad complexion,
the way the furniture surrounded her
like friends, wearing
clear plastic covers.

All Dressed Up For The Dance

We had a small wedding
in the chapel of an orphanage
to which I wore a gray suit
with black shoes
& a striped tie.
A few friends were there,
some aunts & uncles,
& my mother played the march
on a piano
the way she'd always wanted.

We were saying
I Do
when the orphans came screaming
& pounding at the door.
We all pretended
not to hear
but I remember
the door
rattling,
their voices,
the way they tried
to warn me.

-- Joel Deutsch

Boston MA

girl on a tenspeed bicycle

with her blonde hair draped about
her back and breasts
her breasts
fisted