

We kidded him  
about a girl friend  
finally smoked out  
he was writing to his  
parents  
back in Bowie, Texas  
both of them in good  
shape  
for being eighty-five.

Kyle was a little miffed  
as we drove home  
said that phony Foss  
led everyone  
to believe he was an  
orphan  
without a living relative  
in the world  
why does he tell that  
stuff?

#### FAMILY TRADITIONS

I didn't believe it when  
they said Olivia Way  
kept a table set  
with her mother's china  
white  
with a plain gold band  
a wedding present from  
June 1901  
but I had to eat my  
own doubts  
when Mamie took  
me there last year  
no one told me  
there would be fresh flowers  
in a white pitcher  
and silver napkin rings

#### DOUBTING JOHN MAYFIS

He wanted homemade  
bread the worst way  
and bought flour  
and quick-rising yeast  
for Nancy  
who barely could  
make toast



but she was willing  
to try her hand  
and it was too bad  
the yeast was so quick  
it overflowed  
the bowl and  
swamped the sink  
John said he  
didn't think she could  
bake bread anyway

— Wilma Elizabeth McDaniel

Tulare CA

#### ARTHUR RIMBAUD (1854 - 1891)

He chose not to write what others expected.  
Such expectations turned his stomach.  
He chose instead to create chaos,  
to extinguish the candles in his mother's church.  
He was a child of excesses consumed by horizons.  
He dreamed of Zanzibar and China, uncharted land,  
far off places. He was plagued by curiosity  
and a bottomless boredom. He ran away from home.  
He tramped the back roads to Brussels and Paris.  
He covered The Netherlands with a carnival.  
He crossed the Alps on foot.  
He studied the Black Arts, the Alchemy of Words.  
He drank absinthe, he smoked hash.  
His goal: to transform the soul, to make it monstrous.  
He loved disturbing the peace.  
In London he took a hard look at the evil cultivating  
in Verlaine's eyes. He spat on his friend's cross.  
They argued. Called each other the Anti-Christ.  
Verlaine lost control and shot him in the hand.  
Rimbaud returned to the continent, began writing  
his masterpiece. Verlaine was locked up on charges.  
After he finished, Rimbaud turned his back on poetry,  
called it quits, and plunged into another life.  
He was nineteen, ripe for perfection.  
He sailed to Cyprus and broke rocks in the quarries.  
Crossing over to Asia Minor, he ran guns and coffee.  
He worked his way down the coast to Africa.  
He hunted elephant, he peddled tobacco.  
Finally he settled in a hell-hole called Harar.  
There he spent his remaining years roasting  
inside the crater of an extinct volcano.  
In his letters to his mother he constantly asked  
for news about the construction of the Panama Canal.  
He had to return to France for an operation.