

Pawnee City Poems

I.

this last poor kiss
the small white bandstand
on the courthouse square
screams in hopping leaves
and flapping flaking paint
"I am dying, Egypt, dying"
etcetera

II.

drove down to Kansas for dinner
gram&grandad bon&jim
family and me
had hamburger steak
and creme de menthe sundaes
that's gone now
on the way back the slate hiway
the headlights caught fireflies
made the cornfields explode
thousandfold

III.

World War II
small town America
my father's adolescent fantasies
dusty roads fishing gram
heavy in the kitchen
freckles' cold nose and warm eyes
grown old as I was born,
cut adrift, children gone—
trips down frightened me
as a child,
ichabod crane flights
headlong from headless fields
into the dark old farm town
a warp of flame,
fire like strawberry wine,
could take the tinder town.
It could be no less gone.
—Scott Stewart



photo by Monte Gerlach

Snow

Silence slowly smothers cinders
Neither noise nor nothing known
Objects onward; offers, honors
Where were we, wandering one?

Philt

To fill the void with something
With something I have toyed
Complete could mean but one thing
To fill the void with void
—Robert Brehm

photo by Dan Ladely



It makes no difference where I go
There's just one thing that won't go
slow—my mouth

Should I slip or fall on either ice or
the snow
Never fails there's disgust and it
hollers "Oh no"—my mouth

The dictionary explains such words as
poise
Evidently it remembers more about
noise—my mouth

There are just a few who can always
be quiet
The look I receive says "Why don't
you tie it"—my mouth

I guess it does travel when it really
should stop
I've been told it's speedier than any
top—my mouth

All our sports are such fun year after
year
I'd never deny it to stand up and
cheer—my mouth

At times I feel it's been unfairly
blamed
But again I know it should have been
tamed—my mouth

There is a day coming with no more
to be said
And I know you can guess it has to be
dead—my mouth

—Phyllis Fosbender