

The poets

The last time William Kloefkorn put together a book-length collection of poems they looked at life through the eyes of a 70 year old Kansas farmer. The book, entitled *Alvin Turner As Farmer*, was published by Road Runner Press last spring.

Now he has completed another set of 48 poems and sent it off to a California publisher, but the main character is a little different type of person.

"These poems are about a 19-year old youngster," Kloefkorn said. "They show him leaving a small midwest town, bored and restless, and he wanders around the country bumping into people.

"The book is called *Moving On*. It begins with restlessness and ends with restlessness," said Kloefkorn, a teacher of creative writing at Nebraska Wesleyan University. The boy starts out with the

notion he might do great things but he's always beholding to the little town he's from."

He admits the theme isn't new, but he'll try to bring a little freshness to the writing.

"If you sit around waiting for a totally new subject you'll wait forever," Kloefkorn said. "You should try to invent new ways to say old things. Only form is new."

Kloefkorn, 40, with medium length gray hair and sideburns that stretch down below his ears, was born on a farm in south central Kansas. When he was 2 his parents moved to Attica, a Kansas town of 700, and he grew up there.

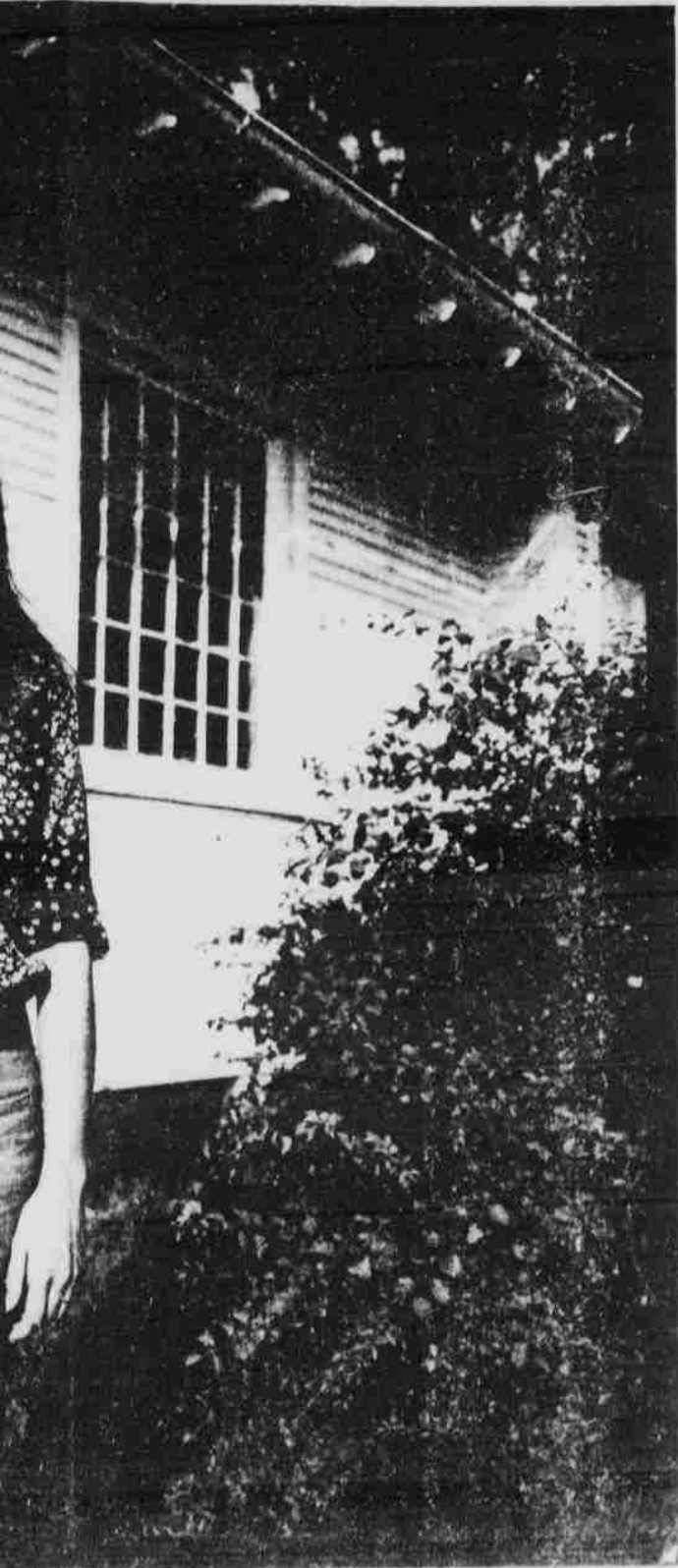
"The poems in *Alvin Turner* were provoked by my grandfather, who is dead now, and I've written about him as I would have him be," Kloefkorn said.

from *Moving On*

(44)

There is a beer can bobbing on Walden Pond.
Also a duck.
Not far from Oshkosh, Wisconsin,
a young man in marshmallow pumps
is drop-kicking a football.
He is unaware of the girl in the yellow smock,
in Tallahassee, who is reciting First Corinthians 13:3,
or of the lass in Sandy Springs
who has chosen the school custodian's closet
as the setting for her first pregnancy.
Meanwhile, a jet drops from the air
like a deceased quail,
a length of its instrument panel
blooming like curious grass for the milkcows.
Along the main street of Timothy, Wyoming,
a rodeo queen is aware of her measurements
while in a cemetery west of Waterloo
the Republicans and the Democrats
are at each other's bones.
Even in Chicago the various world drones on:
a pimp on State Street peddles leftover liver,
a man not more than half a mile away
dances with his only wife,
a woman.

William Kloefkorn



yourself to fresh influences, like where other people are at and saying, 'That's a bunch of bullshit. I wouldn't do it that way.'

"You've got to have that kind of extreme self-belief. The neat thing about it is that everybody's different.

"I mean, I really admire professionalism, I really admire dedication. And I would accept anything if I felt that it was done with that level of conviction. Whether or not I agreed with it or not. Whether or not I was interested in it. But I really appreciate that dedication, you know.

"And anything less than that is just some kind of foppish jacking off."