

Poems Selected by Marvin Bell

Marvin Bell was the first poetry editor (1970-71) of *The Iowa Review*. Twice we have run interviews with him and his poems have appeared here on several other occasions. For many years, his students have been active in our poetry reading circle. "They come from another planet," he likes to say of them. Their extra-terrestrial insights, guided lightly by Marvin, have long worked to our advantage.

This spring, Marvin retires from the faculty of the Writers' Workshop after a long career and eighteen collections of poems. "I went out to walk on the moon and there it was," he writes in his most recent, *Rampant* (Copper Canyon 2004). "I had to step over the curb and into the street." We wanted "to walk on the moon" with him and so invited him to select the poems for this issue.

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To fit in with the change of events, words, too, had to change their usual meanings. What used to be described as a thoughtless act of aggression was now regarded as the courage one would expect to find in a party member; to think of the future and wait was merely another way of saying one was a coward; any idea of moderation was just an attempt to disguise one's unmanly character; ability to understand a question from all sides meant that one was totally unfit for action.

—Thucydides (c. 455-400 BC)