

TIMOTHY KRCMARIK

*Boll Weevil Ode*

You wouldn't deserve one either, pal,  
if this scorched morning of sunflowers  
twenty feet high didn't mean  
extinction—if immortal glory  
didn't require oblivion on the scale of Russian  
tsars, the tears of at least one librarian  
shelving old elegies in the soul.  
But it does. So what the hell  
you ginhouse Caligula, you sex-nosed  
Grendel raping the white cups  
of great and sometime gods. World's  
Smallest Carpetbagger, Rio Grande Rider,  
Glutton of the Mississippi Delta.  
Your mouth full of cotton  
that softly spoke oblivion to so many  
hardened lives will soon exist  
only in the *Boll Weevil Blues*  
of the great Charlie Patton.  
You, the winged Troy in *destroyed*,  
the Black Ciudad of Scoured Throats.  
Crossing Centerville, Texas today,  
my radio says the cropdusters  
have your number.  
A twenty-first century hemlock  
savvy enough to breech your bloody  
cockpit and fry the Red Baron  
blitzkrieging through your genes,  
toxic enough to wind your trillion  
music boxes into Darwin's rotten teeth.  
Oh I spread your onyx exoskeletons  
unbolted, unhinged, unsprung—  
over the barbwire fields of praise  
and sing your epitaph:

You knew a good thing when you'd found it.  
You wore down horrible teeth  
against the fibrous heart of life  
and spent a thousand winters  
weaving the old epic in your stomach.  
Blind hunger was your innocence.  
You bested a century of science  
and found glory in a bard's gut strings.