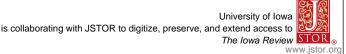
## Tying Bean Strings / Robert Morgan

Hoyt Mountain rose cool over its abutments as we worked away from the creek, hanging not clothes but threads every foot on the half-mile line. The clods seemed sharp as broken glass. One hand noosed the rough jute to the wire like filaments the beans would run and light with leaves, while the other tied the lower end to twine we'd later nail at the ground. Our weft would trap the vines and lead them straight at the noon sun. Sweat bees dug and stung. The lint of hemp and barky lumps stuck to our sweat, rashed sunburned shoulders. Wind took the finished rows like hoisted sails and the field cruised under its cloth far from harvest. I cooled my feet in the sand near the creek. By evening rabbits would cut loose a few panels as they came out to feed on the young sprouts and the spans would blow free as gossamer in the night breeze, evade the grasping runners. Next morning we'd find the strings tangled on splintery poles and unravelling like yarn in the dew, ends swollen like brushes from wiping the clods.

## Take Yourself Back / Diane Wald

Please keep these comments in sequence. I have to move by the end of next week: the fact that time grows shorter is just another imperative I can resent. Take yourself back to whatever you were doing this date in 1953. My brother hadn't been born long. I was starting school. His face

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was something I'd once flail with a hairbrush, later something I wanted to kiss. Someone said, "Don't you kiss your brother goodbye?" and I was afraid that the past was coiling too quickly, felt it around my neck. I am trying to alert you to a slippery fact: that every night passes once of course, but you can usually choose where to sleep. Try that chair in the spare room. It may still be very lonely there, but you will recall tonight quite clearly then, and the sequence of surrounding dreams. If I calculate correctly sixty times three-sixty-five brings me well over twenty thousand, that many nights. I would like to remember a very great deal: even a short life has length, a short life, backwards.

## Circolo Della Caccia / Peter Davison

(for Douglas Allanbrook)

Italian butchers love the shooting season. It lasts at least six months, some places longer. Thrushes, larks, and other speckled singers hang up to ripen, dangling by their bloody beaks, eyes glassy, feather coats bedraggled. Any old bird who makes it through the season has lasted out a war-the hunters number twice any army Italy has mustered and this produces natural selection for songlessness or silence in the woods. Just scuff your shoe on any gravel walk and thickets are vacated on the instant with a desperate scramble and a chirped alarm. Then hours go by without a glimpse of a bird, just distant songs of sex and altercations. You wonder why the hunters mightn't shoot the swallows that patrol the city rivers hell-bent as bats, or bag the swifts that twitter above your head at cocktails on the terrace. Though songbirds of open spaces, fields, and mountains