## The Homecoming/Reginald Gibbons

This summer the garden really did make.

The mildly toxic tapwater percolates at a boil through string beans.

Bread and salad on the table, the knives and forks that never have changed.

As I walked past the closet doors they swung open like vaults

and displayed the artifacts of an earlier self, stacked neatly,

but for a journey I made without them: I wanted

nothing with me, and one day I will have to pay a stranger to return

to all this archaeology and sell it. Nothing,

in fact, is ever thrown away, but still a ceaseless devotion to creditors has

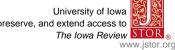
kept the gods of income and expenditure hovering at the windows: they

exacted a sacrifice, once, through the junkie who appeared brandishing a gun and

(even here, in the deputized shade, under dripping, subtropical eaves)

demanded the forgotten hopes glittering on your ring fingers, and the key

to the car . . .



## Your grandmother would like you to call her.

The trip there leads to the realm of the fabulous—

the ribboning scissortails pose a last time on the wires;

new apartments rise haunch-first, halftimbering faked over plywood; and the glowing malls

whose werewolves of commerce thrive on a diet of credit. But-attend

to the unremembered and the old: "Drive Friendly" past buzzards standing

glutted at the roadside; fetch groceries from the U-Tot-Em; heed the factory roar

transmitted through anesthetizing airconditioners to every den ...

As we eat, eponymous heroes haunt newscasts and conversation: Travis,

Houston, Polk, San Felipe–streets where trucks collide

with a televised whisper and an occasional building crumples in flames.

Lethargic thoughts acquiesce as anchormen recite today's crime report:

Homicides 7, Robberies 82, Assaults 29, Rapes 6 Double this sum, multiply by nine,

walk thrice in a circle. There is a decorum that demands one's silence.

Don't you want more gravy?

This road leading home-through the security check, jet din, past concrete fields,

yaupons and banana fronds, to this fieldom of regret, dotted

with petite tract castles—ends in an old routine, the clearing away, the ritual

refusal that greets an offer to wash the dishes. The closet doors swing

shut. There is a decorum. Put out the light, let love fill the dark.

## Condensation / Stephen Sandy

A wisp of straw hangs from the apple branch. On his window condensation blurs his view, couples walking by the river. Apples, spilled by the wall.

This autumn plenty. There, white noise from the heart. And no one to hear the old voices, the singing. The cricket crutches moonward from the cooling hearth. This

small clamor in his blood is somehow some small knowledge of his child: which will become a protean encroachment on the petty dark of solitude.

Possession is nine-tenths of the disenchantment. The hills go platinum with frost.