

## Three Poems · *William Ford*

### AUGUST DEPRESSION, WINTER DREAMS

*West Branch, Iowa*

1.

By the early month the corn reaches up  
Throat high, is a thick grid  
Of tobacco size leaves rivaling  
Anything legend in the Carolinas.  
You do nothing but porch sit  
Feeling the blood slow to a clot,  
Your eyes worn out from counting  
Your neighbor's well-worked furrows  
Whereas you have barely enough garden  
And not enough news of your wife  
Far distant. You cannot get over  
All those things you let simmer  
On the well-resolved back burners  
Of the worst winter in many.

2.

Christmas brought darkness earlier.  
You could see the bruise-purple glow  
Of farm lights and the snowy flatness  
For miles and miles. You watched breath  
Collecting fingerprints on the glass  
As though for the local sheriff.  
Behind you sprawled the cut open ream  
Of tabula rasa bond and the notes  
For the letters not yet written.  
The air was a carcinoma blue,  
The mind's blue making up a story

Over the dead fields of plenty,  
Taking its time with crows overhead  
All the way home to West L.A.

## OF MILES DAVIS

*for Paul Zimmer*

The pop-out eyes belong to Baldwin  
But are sadder, meaner, more direct  
In their accusations against us.

The French have given him a medal  
And assigned him Picasso's genius.  
In the Third World he outsells Bird.

Costumed tonight in a shimmering tent  
Of silver, he stands under the spot,  
Head crook'd, glasses as dark

As the eyes of Tiresias.  
He's blowing a funky put-together  
Bouquet of malevolent flowers

From *Bitches Brew* and *Live Evil*  
Still daring all comers to take in  
The African off-beats and squeaks,

The electric sub-harmonies and shifts  
Midstream, notes without place  
Except in Black air only—

As from the Devil himself—the whole sound  
Shaking with a cocaine jumpiness  
He says he finally did kick.