

## THE SQUARE DANCE

What must they be thinking—  
as the bootheels stomp time  
on the barn's sawdust floor  
& the rotting boards whine  
up & down rusty nails  
like a plucked thing of music,  
not the fiddle, not the banjo,  
not the Jew's harp or the caller  
in the polyester collar  
who sells life insurance  
& like hick electrons  
we hoot, sweat & hoe down,  
& locked at the elbow  
we swing & do-si-do  
while the light bounces off  
galvanized washtubs  
full of ice, beer & breasts  
under gingham do tom-toms  
& we all come together,  
touching wrists in the middle  
like a flower closing up  
for the night, till we blossom,  
reassume goofy orbits  
while the dumb/dumb bass picks  
& grins, Nate spits tobacco  
as below us, bewildered  
in stalls, watching steam rise  
off manure minarets  
& the windows of rain,  
listening, listening  
to the yahoos who dance  
as they stand fingerless,  
unable to hold  
instruments  
—the horses?