

## Three Poems · *John Bensko*

### ESCAPING EDEN

Maybe they don't want to remember  
where exactly,  
or maybe they can't  
because everything  
down miles of coastline  
is very new,  
or else it wears  
the same abandoned face  
of salt and sun bleached  
neglect.

But somewhere  
is where they stayed,  
the tiny room  
with the huge radio  
receiving only one station  
and the sink dripping  
all night  
while on the bed  
they made  
my beginning.

My mother remembers  
the bus ride down from Tallahassee,  
how a woman  
passed out from heat  
and they laid her in the aisle  
where the curves  
in a constant,  
careless insistence  
rocked her head  
no.

My father remembers  
a dock, which even then  
was leaning  
and the tide  
draining the flats  
until the view  
was all of mud  
and the low rough mounds  
of oyster shells.  
They watched the sunset  
in misery.  
The mosquitoes knew  
as they did  
it was too hot  
to be inside.

Living north of here  
I come along this road  
and have to make up  
my own place  
of beginning.  
I have gone against  
their lack  
of memory.  
I have picked  
an abandoned barracks  
in the tall grass  
under pines.

If there is a pier  
it is hidden beyond the woods.  
If there is a sunset  
it comes here no longer  
on the water  
but through the trees.

I feel like the woman  
on the bus  
shaking my head  
without knowing it,

not because I want  
to unmake myself  
but because  
even if they could  
tell me the truth,  
it would be  
here, among the scattered  
bricks of an old  
foundation post  
and the rusty nails  
lying in the sand  
like petrified worms.

I can see  
how the old pines  
are twisted from a storm  
and all are bent  
away from the sea.  
I can hear the insects  
whose wings buzzing  
are here the same  
as they always have been  
everywhere.