# Three Poems · Janet Piper

## COWARDICE

The pattern has been Fear and flight At the first sight Of the Ugly or Evil.

I have been no comfort In trouble, to anyone-Not even my son-The unforgivable sin,

For which no tears atone; The burden of age, Which no prayers lighten Or assuage.

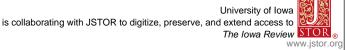
## EAST TEXAS WILD LIFE

#### I

Roaches I dislike For the arrogance Of their stance,

But more, I suspect From fear and respect For their power of endurance.

Entomologists say They are not as old As the earth, but nearly,



And here they will stay When the human race Has long passed away.

#### Π

Moths have depleted my wardrobe, And, unlike other bugs Have eaten my rugs.

What mercy do they merit Who work such mischief In secret?

#### III

As for ants, the small Sugar ants, I mean— I fear I may have ingested A bit of that infinitesimal Protein, unseen.

# "Behind This Mortal Bone"

My life is over And my days are done. It is my turn— My time has come.

Adelaide Crapsey said, "I weave my shroud But no one knows." I add: "Nor cares

What one wears-To drape the skeleton, Cover the bone-We die alone."