

Iowa  
Aidan Dunkelberg

Three or four miles from my grandmother's house  
A mineral spring rises from the ground  
And flows into the Cedar River.  
As boys my father and his brother  
Would ride down to the river on their bicycles  
And sit fishing on its grassy banks.  
In rural Iowa it was one of the few places  
Not covered in acres of cornfield,  
Ripe golden ears as tall as a man.  
They could fish for hours,  
Whiling away summer days as long as the cornrows  
Until the time came to go back home,  
Stopping to drink from the pure crystal spring  
Before they got on their bicycles  
And rode back with the sun dipping behind the corn.  
Now nearly forty years later  
I sit by the banks of that river  
With my parents and grandmother  
And my grandmother's ninety-six-year-old neighbor.  
I remember him telling stories of the time  
His high school basketball team was snowed in  
Trapped inside their opponent's schoolhouse  
By a surprise winter storm.  
They spent the night on wooden classroom floors  
And shoveled out the bus the next morning.  
But the road to his house hadn't been plowed,  
So he walked five miles home in waist-high snow.  
Summer and winter, snow and corn:  
These are the two images of Iowa,  
And I see them as if through the kaleidoscope  
My grandmother keeps on the table in the living room,  
Constantly shifting, blending into one,  
Until I set the kaleidoscope of the past down  
And see a dog drinking clear crystal water;  
An old man sitting on a grassy river bank  
Fishing for memories carried along by the current.