

DEAN YOUNG

Proxy

I've just about lost Pennsylvania.
My only chance to get a job there
I was disqualified because of, get this,
my rank, but they hired my best friend
which maybe won't destroy him although
he's already found the graves of grandparents
he never met 7,000 steps from where he moved,
the half-address he's inspired enough about
to alter his decor from cardboard to plywood,
from stacks of books on the floor to bricks
and planks, his mad gimpy Datsun
always pointed toward the Cape.
He's always trying to escape, I'm
trying to find where I belong but
arguing with his Pittsburgh answering machine
almost makes up for the absence of locusts
in California, how I miss their runners weeding
under the house, wrecking the plumbing,
buckling the street, how they test the air
throwing up a thorn then one candlebraous
blossom big as the face of a young giraffe.
And winters breaking the keys in locks,
blocks of bituminous snow only acid rain
can budge, how you never see anyone in a tie
the same color as his shirt. But it's the typography
he's starting to love, the sidewalks that end
at gorges, the bluffs above churches,
the hideous juxtaposition of architecture
left by giant, warring tribes of alien insects.

And the cheap, guttural breakfasts, and how
you can't go anywhere without crossing
at least one river.