

in urging nature to remake itself  
for our convenience, in a feast of evil.  
To throw the window open will not help:  
the fumes of our roast conscience dwell at ease  
with the intonation of traffic in our ears.

Maria Gillan

IN NEW JERSEY ONCE

In New Jersey once. marigolds grew wild.  
Fields swayed with daisies,  
Oaks stood tall on mountains  
Powdered butterflies graced the velvet air.

Listen. It was like that.  
Before the bulldozers.  
Before the cranes.  
Before the cement sealed the earth.

Even the stars, which used to hang  
in thick clusters in the black sky,  
even the stars are dim.

Burrow under the blacktop,  
under the cement, the old dark earth  
is still there. Dig your hands into it,  
feel it, deep, alive on your fingers,

know that the earth breathes and pulses still.  
Listen. In New Jersey once,  
flowers grew.