

John Appling Sours

SITTING ON THE PORCH OF THE DURANT HOTEL ON A
HOT AUGUST AFTERNOON IN CHICO, TEXAS

From the main street
of the flat town in Texas
he sees
through a fish-eye lens
only the bowels of a horse
moving.
A black man in an open shed
moans, swallows hard,
sick in his throat
over a pile of dying piglets.
Flies encircle a blood-soaked chicken
Still twitching in a pool of burgundy
by the side of the road.
They scatter and
settle on a dry fishhead.
A sparrow hawk glides above the town
and comes to rest in a scrub oak
safe from the blazing Texas sun.