

Here in Pencil, Neatly Printed

Jason Kurtz

In a quaint thrift shop of forgotten things
was a faded file of old photographs
strewn across the hardwood floor
as if someone had been disemboweled,
spilling their life's blood upon the ground.

I knelt reverently, brushing stiff pictures together,
these perfectly preserved crisp cardboard
ovals of stern prairie folk
that could be my own.

Priceless faces of mothers, fathers, children, yet
here in pencil, neatly printed
on the back of each

\$1.50.

I walked away because, I told myself,
they were not mine.