

# Syracuse Scholar (1979-1991)

---

Volume 3  
Issue 1 *Syracuse Scholar Spring 1982*

Article 3

---

1982

## In Time

Joe-Anne McLaughlin

Follow this and additional works at: <https://surface.syr.edu/suscholar>



Part of the [Poetry Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

McLaughlin, Joe-Anne (1982) "In Time," *Syracuse Scholar (1979-1991)*: Vol. 3 : Iss. 1 , Article 3.  
Available at: <https://surface.syr.edu/suscholar/vol3/iss1/3>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by SURFACE. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syracuse Scholar (1979-1991) by an authorized editor of SURFACE. For more information, please contact [surface@syr.edu](mailto:surface@syr.edu).

gious energy to serve a Protestant imperialism, expanding their own communities and enterprises against the Indians with the energy of Indians.

**T**he idea of an incensed God and the preoccupation with hell in the Great Awakening were fed by images of the dances and fires of avenging Indians. In the theories of hell advanced in the Great Awakening, internal misery and future damnation were fair punishment for the greed of self-righteous, self-appointed Christians. Thus in an indirect, internalized sense, awakened colonists sensed their own wrongs in some relation to the rightful claims of the Indians. But this sense of indebtedness remained in the underworlds of hell and of unconscious guilt. Because the Indians haunted and avenged them, American Protestants could not awake to a conscious sense of dependence on and gratitude toward the Indians for their gifts of agriculture, medicine, and spiritual liberation. Jonathan Edwards argued that sinners tried to escape hell and rise above internal misery by self-flattery and good intentions. Using an analogous argument, one could say that American Protestants sought to cover their internal miseries of guilt and fear toward the Indians with the delusion of ethnic superiority and the flattery of religious self-righteousness. But if the failures of American society have fed off this dilemma, there is a reservoir of religious experience working underneath and through this tragedy. Many Americans have woken up beyond themselves, at least momentarily, to the spiritual voices of their environment. Perhaps one could say that the love of a Great Spirit dwells at the very bottom of the American heart.



Joe-Anne McLaughlin was educated at Syracuse University, where she held a Creative Writing Fellowship and the Cornelia Ward Fellowship. In 1978 she received an Advanced Study Grant for academic excellence and, in 1979, an Academy of American Poets Award. Her work has appeared in several small magazines including *New Letters*, *Three Rivers Poetry Journal*, and *Southern Poetry Review*. She is currently employed as a cleaning woman in Vermont.

## *In Time*

From a chair on the dark side  
Of his study a drowned man  
Watches his body surface.  
It's wedged in the rocks now  
And he can tell by the fit  
He's back in his own chair.  
And the hand that taps the arm  
Is cold; is his own hand.  
He wants to breathe on the hand,  
He would keep it alive. Only  
There in his chest the sound  
Of water rushes between rocks.  
This is the sound the blood makes  
As it plunges into the heart  
Of a man who believes he has drowned.  
Quiet. Listen. Inside. O God. There.

—Joe-Anne McLaughlin