

## THE WANDERER, 1963

Black clouds took the sky like a tired army  
And a charge of gritty wind  
Sniped at the torn shoulder of my coat.  
A swaying girl with stiffened yellow hair  
Teased at her boy friend, "Pop looks cold."  
    "Here—buy yourself a drink!"  
But I did not want their money.  
I wanted them to be afraid.

    The bright brittle people  
    In their shiny boxes,  
    Wound up to IBM  
    From nine to four—  
    Dancers to the tango  
    Of the ticker-tape—  
    Jumping-jacks  
    Of the time card—  
    Clowns of Conformity.

I looked for fear:  
There was a black man afraid to sit down in a bus  
And a white man afraid to make him room.  
I heard ten thousand screaming devils  
    behind barred hospital windows.  
I saw a hundred million mouths  
    afraid to stop laughing.  
And in a reverend circle  
All the princely elders of the world  
Decided not to dare to stop destroying it.

I know now  
That in this Time of the Tranquillizer,  
This Age of the Mushroom,  
This Period of the Plastic Puppet,  
This twentieth century of our poor Lord's dying,  
Men laugh—  
But they are no less afraid  
Than when they hid their wiser eyes in holy shame.  
We all wander now.

—OLIVE HUGHEY