

## CROSSING THE FENCE

(Thoughts of a 1st. Generation Immigrant)

It took a long time to accept  
that he was here to stay -- in this

old body which he'll now have to keep  
for the rest of his life;

and that he'd die in this country:  
that his last great wish would be to go

peacefully. Trips to the Greek Islands  
weren't for him. Supersonic travel

was a spectator sport; yet the British  
Rail Express from Euston to Manchester

was consolation of sorts. Engineering  
and Art and the price of his vote

had turned the coachwork into a poor man's  
Concorde, a flight of imagination

with space for luggage. Surely, he was  
being conveyed more graciously than ever

Queen Victoria managed: had he mellowed  
into thinking there were degrees

to poverty; that being able, say, to exchange  
the canefields of youth for inner-city manhood

was a plus? On his way to the loo he noticed  
an ugly rent on one of the seats

and two smug-looking truants sheltering  
behind the generation gap. Suddenly,

a distant war had spilled over into  
his territory, and Philpot was going to fight.

-- Paul St Vincent

Hull, England