

### A Need for Shade

Sloe-eyed cows loiter below an oak tree  
while a summer wind does battle  
against fragile stem weeds  
staggering like my abusive father,  
looking for a son to hurt.  
The grasses grow ragged  
and speak about the ions of the sun,  
neutralizing magnetic fields on earth,  
searching for some way to explain  
what this week has been and the one before it.  
If I am flesh sunning on rock . . .  
if I am a brain under fluorescent light . . .  
if I am a dream like a wire  
with fire throbbing along it . . .  
if I am death to a man, I have to know it.  
His mind is too complex, and I cannot go  
on sharing his nightmares  
because my own are becoming clearer,  
they open into prehistory  
which looks like a village—  
lighted with the blood of young men in battle—  
where all the fathers are crying:  
"Where is my place in the shade?"

*David Sumner*