

Silos

They rise through scrub trees,
perfectly concentric,
silhouetted against the sky.
Sometimes they take form from behind a hillside,
or appear,
staunch beside crooked tumbling barns.

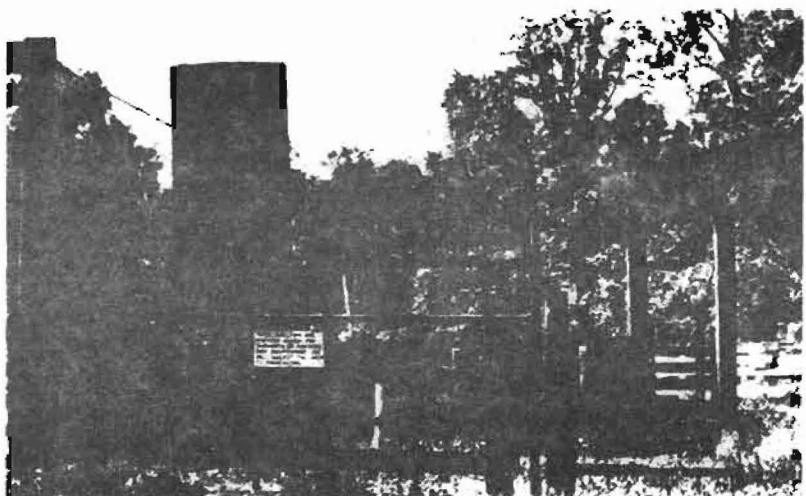
They are perfect and perfectly silent: wonderous:
shaded wine-red or limestone grey,
single or side by side in twos and threes,
hollow stillness against branching and shivering trees.

Did she gaze at them,
looking up from her sink,
while she wiped sweat from her face with the back of her greasy
hand?
Did they rise for her,
silent and perfect,
apart from her clamor-filled, hay strewn world?



In the four-room frame house,
her sketches tilting on walls cracked and slanting,
could she feel the rock foundation being pulled,
inexorably,
down into the gumbo.

As she wrestled calves and steaming kettles of corn,
took wilted dandelions from a grubby fist;
when she baked fourteen loaves of bread before breakfast,





and lay in the close sleepless dark,
thinking of nuzzling voices;
did the wind, keening across the cold clean shapes,
stop her thoughts?

And now,
fifty years later,
we watch the silos.

Driving the interstates,
doling out juice and coke,
we see them in thistle strewn fields,
in pastures reverting to cedar.

Poking along country roads
sighting rusted sinks among sunflowers, foundations disappear-
ing into the soil,
we still gaze at the silos.

Bald in pastures or tangled in scraggly growth,
they stand intact,

perfectly round,

perfectly silent.

June Underwood