

THE PROSE POEM: AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

Volume 1 | 1992

The Frogs Jon Davis

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Jon Davis

THE FROGS

Fourth of July and the children have grown miserable from turning and turning their wobbly cartwheels, from jump-kicking the forces of evil that throng about us, from dumping Kool Aid on the younger children to attract our flagging attentions. These children who are capable of beauty and joy—"Look, Dad! A moth!"—but who quickly weary of the world's surprises as we weary, the parents of all this joy, who wear our silly striped ties—the badges of our race, the honors; who bang our heads against the daily task; who flop on our chaise lounges and rattle the ice in our drinks; who bolt from our homes at mid-life, then return to hammer back the boards through which we burst and live out our lives, pails under all the leaks. Who then fill the wagon with children and drive to a mountaintop to watch meteorites, stars dying across the sky so beautifully we rattle the ice in our drinks and remember the monastery we passed on the drive up, those poor monks who have no cluttered lives against which to measure such purity. And today we sneak four cars to the frog pond, 17th hole, Manchester Country Club, where we tie monofilament to fishing poles, squares of red flannel to monofilament, and dangle those squares before the frogs. They turn to face them, mistaking them for butterflies or moths. They leap and wrap their sticky tongues around the flannel, and we, shouting and whooping, fling them onto the fairway, where they flop and sprawl, where we chase them, where they extricate their tongues and hop, stunned, in whatever direction they face. Poor frogs. Poor frogs. Poor deluded creatures.