

SUBURBIA

Claudia Burbank

Looking up from what had been, only a moment ago,
a recent dark ale, gazing at the place
where we'd dug smashed crockery, pipestems, an arrow-
head or two, William Penn was scowling in the Queen Anne's Lace,
taking in our small, deer- and tick-ridden plot—
the very plot he once owned with half of New Jersey,
the traffic, garbage, griping denizens
even then a blot.
Somewhat absent-minded, somewhat without mercy,
he went at the wild, Brown-Eyed Susans
sterling-top staff falling and falling
the way he might have railed against impious Dutch or Swedes.
Just then a boy—Delaware or Lenape—
hied the rusty weeds
where a barn once stood, where the absent-minded eye
of Lord Stirling may have fallen
looking from the foam of a decent dark ale
at the nearby tavern. A Delaware or Lenape
flashed where viridian
bottle necks were found near the rails
laid by the Irish and pious Neapolitans,
laid on the old Indian trails.
Dodged the Jack-in-the-pulpit
under William's nose after some rabbit,
some tick-ridden does on the bound for I-80.

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Contemporary Rhyme Vol. 3 No. 4 2006