

## *Grandma's Gypsies*

she fed a whole tribe  
once

they came begging  
at her back door

she took them  
to the cellar

loaded them up  
with jars and jars of  
fermented dill pickles

they went away happy  
never came back  
she said

## *Grandma's Sunbonnet Quilt*

Iva and Eva pieced it  
from flour sacks  
back in the winter of 1888  
they trimmed hundreds  
of material slices  
then sewed them  
together in the kerosened halo  
through blizzard-blanketed  
west Texas nights  
their precise stitches  
marching in  
three-fourths inch time  
through three generations  
those threads have  
come to spread  
into my life  
to hold me  
together  
now

*old lady Wilson*

she had money  
lots of money

saved it by  
walking on the Fort Worth Star-Telegram

said that way  
she never had to  
scrub or wax the floor  
and didn't have to buy a mop or broom

saved it by  
recycling birthday cards  
and Christmas gifts people gave to her

said that way  
she knew they would like what they got

saved it by using  
one flush  
a day

said she kept  
the lid  
down

and any company she ever had  
never stayed long enough  
to flush

but she had money  
lots of money

*West Texas Wheat Farmer  
With Early Alzheimer's*

round and  
round

and round  
he went

over his  
eighty  
acres

he drove

his John Deere tractor  
pulling the twenty-four row

wheat planter

never noticed  
he had no  
seed

never noticed  
he didn't  
have to  
stop

for more

## *Salting Down*

it was Grandma  
dipping wash rags  
in salted  
water

one after  
another

after another

on through the magnoliad night  
before his funeral

that kept Grandpa  
from turning

kept him decent  
for the burying  
she said

*Picking Granny Smith Apples  
in West Texas*

green  
and tart  
  
they hang  
  
in the sultry  
August  
sun  
  
clumped  
together by  
  
threes  
  
waiting for  
the twist  
of  
  
harvest

*West Texas Halloween*

the yellow bloom  
of broom-weed  
fills the overgrazed pasture  
a mistletoed snarl of  
mesquite tree  
pokes up  
here  
and there  
flash of white  
tail ruffles  
the green swoop  
of live oak  
branches  
that sway  
in the warm breeze  
thin necks of wild  
turkeys  
wave this way  
a javelina  
climbs  
the limestone hillside  
an October's  
full moon  
slips over  
the Callahan Divide

*Gutting A Diamondback  
Rattlesnake*

at the Sweetwater  
Round-Up

the Jaycees  
clean them

six at  
a time

rattles  
looped into

nooses

one slick  
slice

down each  
white belly

as bloody fingers  
grab the

slim  
intestines

a quick  
jerk and heft  
into a blue barrel

then the sleek  
peel of  
meat



from scaled  
skin

brings twenty-six dollars  
a pound

*horned toad*

a big brown devil

sits on  
my sleeping bag

flicking  
a quick tongue  
at the plump  
red ants

skittering across  
the lumpy landscape

I retreat

leave nature  
to balance  
herself

*it's raining in Texas*

grey clouds skim  
low and slow

just clearing  
the tree  
tops

rain

scatters  
down across  
the bur oak grove

spatters the leaves

like sand  
sifted  
onto

waxed paper

a crizzled crow call  
cracks the  
grey

from back in the timber

rubbery  
croaks of  
green frogs

bounce out  
of the cracks

*Frog*

He hangs  
just below  
the surface  
of slimed water  
bumpy marble eyes  
jut out  
like a submarine surfacing  
He hangs  
a limp lump  
until I  
lean to look  
then he's gone  
in a swirling wiggle  
of green scum

## *Indian Summer in Bowie, Texas*

a toasted breeze  
ripples  
chartreuse orbs  
of bodark  
apples  
oak leaves  
crinkle  
yellow and crimson  
through the timber  
a flock of grackles  
settles into  
dusty tree tops  
sumac veins  
blaze red  
across the pasture  
pumpkins scatter  
orangeness  
between bales  
of timothy  
hay  
as the crescent  
moon cleaves  
October

bodark - Texas rendering of bois d'arc, known in other areas as bowdark, Osage Orange, hedge apples, of the mulberry family, prized for bow wood.

## *Dragon Fly Wing*

squares radiate  
from the wing joint

like spread fingers  
webbed together

square to square to square  
of crackling cellophane

an iridescent shimmer

as I tip it  
to the light

*Parker County Texas Fall*

cottonwood leaves  
yellowed by

the first frost

dangle over  
the meadow grasses  
fluff of seeds

cedars rock  
to and fro  
as the wind

shifts

with the whip  
of cold air

a squirrel chatters  
over an ear  
of corn

acorns pummel  
the dirt

a rotting apple  
attracts

a hover  
of flies







*Buffalo  
Bones*



*Evening Thunderstorm on the  
Callahan Divide*

clouds pile  
along

the eastern  
horizon

like scoops  
of hand

churned

vanilla bean  
ice cream

*Paleo-Indian Feet*

once tread  
this red

west Texas dirt

rolled over  
these

rounded geodes  
as they

packed  
mammoth-boned

tents of  
buffalo

hide  
across

the Callahan Divide