

Gail Brant
Syford Poetry Contest, Honorable Mention

New Interstate

For countless ages past they stood
(the cool green hills; the tall majestic pines)
Serene and undefiled.

And then they came.

Huge steel beasts that clawed and tore
the very bowels of earth. Devouring with
an orgiastic greed the virgin wild.

In agony the hills cry out.
The gaping wounds of earth flow red.
In crashing pain the forests shout
And tall pines died as nerve ends bled.

And then man came.

In mock compassion pressed a concrete bandage
on the ravaged earth,
and spread an amulet of seedlings
on the wounded hills.
With fine steel thread he stitched
the chasms girth,
and buried deep in sawdust tombs
The shattered pines.

And then God came.

He wept to see such wanton devastation
of this-His very own creation!
His gentle tears rained down to bathe the wounds.
The sunshine of His face spread soothing balm.
Shy woodland creatures, faced with desolation,
found safe nesting places in His palm.

Perhaps in ages yet to come the scars will heal
and once again the hills grow lush and pines reach high.
And then, will man return with frantic zeal
And wreck such havoc that again they die?

And if he does, will God again be kind?

Will he, in His great love and mercy, sigh
and once again re-build the world they desecrate?
Or will he say, "Enough!" and let men lie
amid the ruins they themselves create?

How long will God's great mercy temper wrath?
How long before He turns His face away?
We cannot know how little time we have.
Oh! Make us better stewards, Lord, we pray.