

# JAMES DEAHL

## DAKOTA MARSHES

On the way from Minot  
to Jamestown, U.S. 52  
bisects a patch of wetland  
where the winds of autumn  
have stolen all the green  
from its reeds and sedges  
and the drowsing marsh  
awakes draped in the yellows  
and russets of early October.

Going south from Minot  
one could savour the black honey  
of a spinster's breasts  
as afternoon drowns  
behind storm clouds and the moon  
releases its winter birds.  
Here the crows of appetite  
carry pieces of light to  
illuminate the bridal chamber.

Half an hour south of Devils Lake  
wedding bells ring out over  
herons motionless as sentries.  
While reeds enfold the ribbon  
of pavement connecting  
this world to the next,  
the James River  
wraps its sombre cloak  
around the City of Grace.

## THANKSGIVING

The yellowed maple guards the backyard  
and won't permit the wind to enter.

Thick frost covers the roof where squirrels  
scribble the history of old Québec.

The young no longer remember the suffering  
of their parents, the struggle for a language.

Autumn winds sing through reeds  
where darkness spreads from long roots.

Night rides out of the Longfellow Mountains  
and the rough-legged hawk ushers in the stars.