

# Morning With Cows

KAT DUNLAP

A silver suggestion of daybreak  
lies thin-lipped at hill's edge.  
Silence owns the dawn  
only interrupted  
by the ticking of my bicycle chain  
and the drag of the coaster brake.

The barn door is a yellow square  
opening into the soft lowing  
of Guernseys,  
the soft hum of milking machines,  
and Beethoven.

Barn boots stand like soldiers,  
autumn chill absorbed  
in their felt linings.  
My stool is as cold  
as my gloveless hands.

One by one I follow  
the stainless steel milkers.  
One by one I strip  
each udder of remaining milk,

send quick squirts  
toward the tiny, opened mouths  
of resident kittens.

I lean my still sleepy head  
against each warm flank  
breathe in the perfumed air  
of molasses-laced feed  
curling into the troughs.

I am fourteen.