

# Trash Burning, 1976

*by* John Riley

This time the bag's bigger  
than the boy and the door.  
He squeezes and spins

across the brown yard  
dragging the boxes,  
the cans, the chicken bones.

We watch as he tosses  
the last of his chore  
on the dead ash

heap. Right now he sees  
above the tree line  
a silo deep in the winter

mist waver like the heat  
over the matchhead's  
flicker—he shivers

when a cardboard lady  
folds her cold smile  
into the new flame.

