

## I Came Back From The East

Mark Neely

I came back from the East  
via the terrible Ohio

highway and moved in with Kenny who  
got up with the sun on Saturdays

brewed a pot of teeth-knocking coffee  
and drove off to garage sales

where he tried to pick up women  
his theory was that early in the morning

you could see them in their natural state  
their hair in quick pony tails

legs in frayed orange shorts once  
he came home with a turntable some

Tony Bennett records a partial suit of armor  
and a kindergarten teacher named Sarah

I was reading want ads at Kenny's ten-dollar  
kitchen table they reminded me of poems

no one who amounted to anything  
ever looked at them Sarah had a silver

stud in her nose I wondered if  
it scared the kids Kenny fired up a bowl

while I made us omelets with garlic and parsley  
he propped his armor on an old mop handle

and clanged a wooden spoon  
on the chestpiece like a dinner gong

Sarah laughed a cloud of smoke  
when she saw Kenny's Louis Prima

records and taxidermied armadillo  
and the three turntables

already stacked up on his dresser  
I think he was worried about the future