

# QUAGMIRE

GARY FINCKE

Behind our house, a soft bog  
digested things that died there.  
I tested it with my shoes,  
expected hands upraised  
or at least a riot of worms.  
Our nervous dog skittered  
as if she anticipated births.  
In that quagmire smother  
was a sign of spring.  
The swamp, my father said,  
was spreading, bleeding out  
from the earth's black wound;  
our house lay downhill.  
Some nights I expected  
the gurgling of new voices  
thick with slime. Slipping  
under my door, they would  
bubble and multiply,  
rising, like ancestry,  
toward a common ceiling.