



Steven Hind is a native Kansan who grew up at the headwaters of the Verdigris River near Madison. He was educated at Emporia State University and the University of Kansas. He taught English in Kansas for 36 years. Three collections of his poetry have been published: *Familiar Ground* (1980), *That Trick of Silence* (1990), *In a Place With No Map* (1997) and *The Loose Change of Wonder* (2006).

Hind's poetry has been published in periodicals, including *Cottonwood*, *Farmer's Market*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *Inscape*, *Ellipsis*, *Kansas Quarterly*, *American Land Forum*, and *Kansas English*. His poems have been printed in various anthologies, including *30 Kansas Poets*, *Kansas Voices*, *The Book of Contemporary Myth*, and *As Far As I Can See*.

He served as editor of Young Kansas Writers for five years and has been a book talk presenter for the Kansas Humanities Council since 1986. "Poetry is a mediation between feeling and experience, a guiding light, and a demonstration of how language works."

At Home in a Word

You call this blanket of grass
Prairie, because you were born
a member of a tribe who took
to the lean feast in that name.
Your lips hold the word in
to give thanks just so: Prairie,
you say, and hear the grass
speaking through the thorny wind
season after season. You sit
wrapped in that word.

From *In a Place With No Map: New and Selected Poems*
Topeka: Woodley Press, 1997: 14

Ghost Dance

The blue shirt in which my father
died chafes my skin with the dried
sweat of his race. The bullfrogs
punctuate the river's whisper.

My steps step uncertain steps
in the dust as lightning forks the west,
a flash turning the darkness to dream:
The river runs deep, swimming with fish,
where coyote comes to the shore.

"Brother, it is good to see you. Tonight
will be a feast, and every animal will
tell the story of the ancestors. You will
find a place beneath the trees and know
the story of your kind so long denied.

And all of us will feel the embrace of life
in a world that fits its rightful place.

Excursion

Climb through a missing window
in a country house and you enter
the ghost of another life. Tempered
by years of weather, a flowered wallpaper
rots in ribbons to the whisper of wind
through the empty windows. That
stove-less chimney, the creak at the top
of the stairs, the open trunk with its
rummaged junk, a torn tintype of
someone's stiff-backed ancestor –
the upper room becalmed with emptiness
as your breath whispers, Yes, yes, I
know: loss is forever. I know now.

Stafford Ball Back Home

"Blunders cry out information."

William Stafford, Daily Writing

We never report our scores.
No one in our league does.
Our uniforms are camouflage
jerseys and shorts. We play
in the old cow lot and change
the rules once we know them.
The lazy give up and go pro,
if they're grim enough. Sometimes,
we all get a trophy: Least Valuable
Player. I won again last week.

From *The Loose Change of Wonder*