NIGHT CLASS
Worn wooden chairs
Occupy the exhausted room
Anticipating the paling envelope
Of incandescence
Slowly
As darkness captures graying edges of venetian blinds
Vacant spaces fill with the night people
Dangling safe conversations
Twisting in indigestion
Laughing
Sitting sideways slouching
They casually wait
To straighten up for the prof
Peripherally he slides into their dimension
Smiling nodding turning
Talking in fragments
Settling finally in place
Coming to silence
Not quite folding their hands before them
They listen to him
With his nice easy style
Unload the heavy words
Wondering what the weight of their meaning is
Then laden enough
With talk of adolescence and English teaching
They shift in the tired chairs
Eyes cast downward overcast
Signaling that the last clause is due
—Mike Angelotti
Texas Tech University
Lubbock, Texas

INNER CITY TEACHER
All my icy anger
At a world turned traitor
To man and animal,
Flower, leaf and twig,
Melts in velvet pools
Of children’s eyes.
I see them now.
I shall see them ever,
Looking at me, lovely
Like fawns, fearful
Behind four-letter words
And complexities
Of beige and brown
Beneath black crowns
Held high
In the face of strangers.
—Beatrice Janosco
Nimitz Junior High School
Huntington Park, California

DARK NIGHTS
How grateful I am
for that worn brown envelope
tucked into its special place
behind the books.
Often lately,
I open its torn mouth
and let it speak to me
in past tenses.
I reach tenderly into its
bulging cheeks
and pluck bits and scraps of paper,
notes,
and letters,
and listen.
How naive,
these students
to think that I would not horde
their thoughts,
feelings,
hopes,
and frustrations when
they sign them . . .
Love,
They jab into my heart,
and mind,
and gut.
I use them to patch holes
in my dark nights.
—Ron Loewe
Westlake High School
Westlake, California