

1976

John Clare's Badger

Marvin Bell

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ask, I'd say "I'm sorry, it's something you know I can't talk about, and if you insist, I'll have to report you to your officer." That would be the right answer. But neither of them asked. I also thought that maybe one of them, if he didn't already know what Hitler was like in the bedroom, would want to pay to be the first one to make love to me after Hitler. But that too neither of them asked.

POETRY / BELL, LAZARD, MATTHEWS, DUBIE,
JARMAN, EDSON, FINKEL, POULIN, MYERS,
STAFFORD

John Clare's Badger / Marvin Bell

The man we had thought drunk
was twice-stabbed, and the knife
left in his back. I remember
his falling forward, or not one of us
would have come down from the fence.

We would sit that fence at dusk
and truckloads of potatoes, ducks
and cauliflower spill on past
and the farmers without a whimper.
Salt air came up the street

from the South. East and time past
New Amsterdam, we faced
the Atlantic and (we knew this) England.
We were not called. Not chosen.
England might have been a star.

You want to know what happened
to that man? He lived. He fought back.
He's going to die. If there's a reason
it took these twenty years
to round him up again, that may be why.