

1978

Distance

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Recommended Citation

Wojahn, David. "Distance." *The Iowa Review* 9.3 (1978): 92-92. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2424>

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Distance · *David Wojahn*

Tonight the workmen
with red bandanas are building
a house across the street;
light spills from the holes
they've left for windows.
They've inched across the roofbeam,
buckets of shingles in their arms.
This last man leans after
everyone's gone, his head
on a door that's propped on a tree.
I hear him singing to himself.

We both can't sleep.
His singing, and his hand
that drums a hammer again
and again into the ground.
The cats on the roof disturb him;
he stares and hammers,
hears me typing, or finds me
through the window, bent
to my lamp. I've come to admire

the distance between us,
the noises we make to ourselves
in the night, tired
as the lovers in a Japanese print
who've turned and wiped their genitals
with the blue silk scarves
they had stuffed in their mouths
while coupling.