1991

The Square Dance

Patrick O'Leary

Follow this and additional works at: http://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview
Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.4071
The Square Dance

What must they be thinking—
as the booteels stomp time
on the barn’s sawdust floor
& the rotting boards whine
up & down rusty nails
like a plucked thing of music,
not the fiddle, not the banjo,
not the Jew’s harp or the caller
in the polyester collar
who sells life insurance
& like hick electrons
we hoot, sweat & hoe down,
& locked at the elbow
we swing & do-si-do
while the light bounces off
galvanized washtubs
full of ice, beer & breasts
under gingham do tom-toms
& we all come together,
touching wrists in the middle
like a flower closing up
for the night, till we blossom,
reassume goofy orbits
while the dumb/dumb bass picks
& grins, Nate spits tobacco
as below us, bewildered
in stalls, watching steam rise
off manure minarets
& the windows of rain,
listening, listening
to the yahoos who dance
as they stand fingerless,
unable to hold
instruments
— the horses?