

1973

# A Garland of Teeth

Robert L. McRoberts

Follow this and additional works at: <http://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

## Recommended Citation

McRoberts, Robert L.. "A Garland of Teeth." *The Iowa Review* 4.1 (1973): 4-5. Web.  
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.1447>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact [lib-ir@uiowa.edu](mailto:lib-ir@uiowa.edu).

## MAKING THE MOON COME TRUE

I have said it before: the streetlight  
on the corner is not the moon;

it is controlled by an energy  
cell at the nape of the neck,

and it responds only to  
the absence of light. Furthermore

during the day I have seen him come,  
the man in the yellow truck

to replace the glass sclera and  
I know what you're going to say but

I refuse to speak of it; the streetlight  
on the corner is not an eye.

## A GARLAND OF TEETH

We are all smiling: perhaps because  
of the sun we tilt our heads

forward and pull our hats  
down over the eyes. But the casual

stance remains: one in the front  
even crosses his left leg over the right,

tucks his thumb into his vest  
and leans on his cane. Fine.

In the back row someone is holding  
a garbage can cover behind a woman's

head. We are making progress. See?  
Most of us are showing you

the insides of our hands.

*Robert L. McRoberts*

## DESERTIONS

I have deserted the causes  
of my dreams.  
The men I adore have perished.  
The women  
open their blouses and air  
falls out, plump and empty.

I have deserted the music  
of my friends;  
dark notes, fantasies.  
I have taken my destiny  
out of their soft hands.

All my country, its vast lakes  
of despair, its mountains,  
equal to a single pebble  
in my shoe, a dampness beneath  
the sun's perception.

A man passes me on the street.  
His face is like my father's;  
strong and old:  
A sycamore by a white stream—

And I desert him; even as I pass  
I am deserting him, leaf by leaf,  
each light branch, vanishing.