

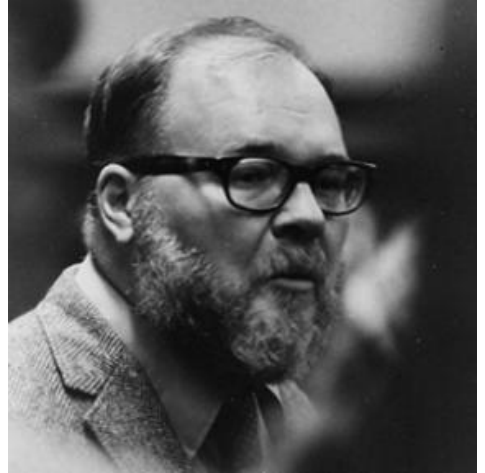
Autumn Begins in Martins Ferry, Ohio

By James Wright, 1927–1980

In the Shreve High football stadium,
I think of Polacks* nursing long beers in Tiltonsville,
And gray faces of Negroes in the blast furnace at
Benwood,
And the ruptured night watchman of Wheeling Steel,
Dreaming of heroes.

All the proud fathers are ashamed to go home,
Their women cluck like starved pullets,*
Dying for love.

Therefore,
Their sons grow suicidally beautiful
At the beginning of October,
And gallop terribly against each other's bodies.



*Polacks—a derogatory reference to a Polish person

*pullets—a young hen (female chicken) who has not yet laid an egg