

## In a Crumbling Barn

**W. Grant Norman**

In a crumbling barn  
With torn bleached boards  
Hanging from wooden shingles

We will sit by the fire  
A cool spring evening  
Counting stars  
Through holes in the roof

I will twist a string  
From your cut-off jeans  
Around my finger and  
You will be telling me  
How you will live  
In a cabin  
In the woods.

I see the table  
Plaid oil cloth cover  
Draping over enameled legs  
A wash pan in the corner  
And a worn braid rug  
Hugging the bubbled floor

I hear the creek  
And peepers and crickets  
Sing with the splashing rocks

The old neighbor's stories  
His gun-shy hound  
And the rusting front-yard Ford

I feel his red face  
Spotted with whiskers  
Around the crinkled nose

I smell fresh-baked bread  
And a kettle of bean soup  
On the blackened wood-  
burning stove

The jasmine flowers  
Flutter in a blue vase  
On the paint-chipped window  
sill

You had read by an oil lamp  
Wrapped in a quilt  
On a too-hard feather mattress

I had chopped wood in the  
snow  
Wet toes waiting  
To warm by the coals in the  
stove

You will be asleep  
The book on the floor  
As I sit at the table  
Writing a letter

And I will stop  
And remember  
The crumbling barn  
And the night I didn't  
tell you  
A dream