

Thieving

JANET BANKS

You are invisible swinging
there on the porch, biding time.
Corroded chains whine, mimic
tornados' lashing winds as they
head toward town.

Missing car keys found in silverware
drawer, T-Bills stuffed in a grocery sack,
taxes overdue, first clues you are ravenous,
thirsty for memories, a scrambler of faces,
familiar names.

You hide in pats and pounds of butter
consumed, pork chops, beefsteak
drenched in gravy, in cinnamon
rolls baked to stave off fears from
childhood years of food so scarce.

Heart attacked but did not kill.
Your games of confusion torture,
break the spirit clean in half until
frozen in a chair my father sits for
years locked inside his head.

The swing and porch demolished,

family buried long ago. Insured
for theft, we never collected a skinny
dime for all you stole—no one to blame
the doctor explains.