

The Man Without Sin

H. L. Miles

There's this house where
four retarded men live who
go to church on Sundays.

In the other ward, they come
at nine; sometimes I see the four
shaking hands like the ushers.

This year, the first Sunday,
meeting times change and it
is our turn to worship at nine.

One of the four—that man
alone there on the front bench—
comes to our meeting.

He turns the hymnal end for end,
flips pages singing uuuh oooh,
and solos past the rests.

The deacon watches the man's
hand fumble the white pieces
of bread in untidy reverence.

At testimony time a deacon
walks to the front
with a mike and coil of cord.

The man stands, grabs the mike,
and the deacon flinches
and looks to the bishop.

The bishop straightens
in his seat, bends forward,
as lines in his forehead deepen.