ROBERT CRUM

**The Bat in the Bedroom**

Was it there at all,

the bat whose leathery

extended wing

we thought we saw hanging

from the cat’s mouth?

And when one of us yelled,

didn’t the cat run off,

leaving hell’s image

to flap around the room

and bounce against the mirror?

But under the blanket

we trapped it with,

no impression, no movement.

Only our lightest

prodding with a broom

discovered a squeaking

like a broken appliance.

We called the police.

“Take a broom,” they said,

“and smash it.” But we

had no heart for the obvious.

We put on our garden gloves,

and using a dust pan and notebook

we enfolded it in still more blankets and sheets.

We threw the bundle into the air

outside the house, but

from its unravelling

saw nothing, nothing at all,

escape. What

must the neighbors think

to see us on the porch

with our arms raised toward heaven

while all around us

the life of our bed

floats down like parachutes

people have fallen from.