The Humming of the Bones
before time
before I had any conception
of the I of me I sat on
my hands until feeling
feeling drained from
the flesh
I thought as a beast
without question
that was blind instinct
driving me on
maybe I forgot to forget
the stabbing faces
snorting memory —
less through fields of
haste
that I was Mr. where-are-you-man
Mr. face-of-blue-lights
Mr. cloud-man not
knowing why
the clouds I am speaking of
are all dead by row
no longer are tears stones
I squeeze from my eyes
I accept life’s rhythms
realizing that all is
God-speeded or God-
slowed for reasons
unbeknownst to
mankind
and blood?
what is blood but bridges
more and more I keep
my distance from
the weathermakers of gloom
who turn privacy inside out
and I have come to appreciate
the velvety perfumed
presence absent in a stone’s
bone-white rose

Robert Bowie
College Park, Md.

Cold Shoulders
Reared rurally
Down in the Baptist belt
Community, unity and support
I always felt,
Big cities in the North
Aroused my curiosity
Downtown lights on all night
Executive opportunity,
University grad into fads
Said goodbye to mom and dad
They looked so sad
I’m no longer a lad
Going North can’t be all that bad,
Cold weather, cold shoulders
Can’t be yourself
Gotta act a little older,
Making the weekly dollar
In a white collar
High class I am at last,
Greeting me with nods
Is this a facade?
Who cares about your past?
Working and playing in the big city
Getting you down?
Who will have pity
At a glance
All are hi-sidity,
Acceptance
If you keep your distance
Friendship
Depends on your dollars and cents,
University grad into fads
Said goodbye to mom and dad
They looked so sad
Going North can’t be all that bad,
Cold weather, cold shoulders
Can’t be yourself
Gotta act a little older.

Iley Brown, Jr.
Washington, D.C.