

BRAND NEW STATE
Clay Matthews

Out of pity I bring you the empty soup bowl,
and say We are all just metonymic functions
for what my father called a higher cause.
The glass breaks. The wind breaks
through the chimes that some hippy made
out of depression silverware, as if
anyone had reason for silverware in the great
and relentless emptying of the soul
into the bottoms of old suitcases and trunks
of cars. You thought I was going to say
depression? My mouth has not been that
tired since 1932, when it wasn't, when we
wasn't, when the old and familiar tune
of the wind on a flat surface was neither old
nor familiar, but some sound against
which the Okie's heart sank. I am in Oklahoma
now, I am writing from there as we speak.
I grew tomatoes this year, and if you think
about where we come from this is a great
achievement for both myself and Oklahoma.
You see how the self loses itself in the state.
You see the vice versa as well. I have not seen
the Dust Bowl but I have seen several individual
versions of a scar. If you stand on high ground
here, you can see a long way. You can see
the places the land has given up, and where
the low spots become their own sort of resistance.
The wind is even something some people
are proud of now. As if to say we have stood
upright in the face of disaster, and even
dare it some times to do what it was it once did.