

Gates

We live behind locked gates
on "land" that once ran free
as a river of grass
while we pay Others
so little to build
and maintain
this retirement dream.

We "make" ponds from dwindling
ground water and revel
in the herons and egrets
whose natural habitat
we have poisoned
beyond dead
then we must
drench ourselves
in chemicals to repel the insects
and diseases we created.

We put up panther "crossing"
signs on six-lane highways
to soothe our guilt
for killing
the few remaining
Puma concolor coryi
we have hemmed in with
too little "territory" and too few prey.

We celebrate the sunshine
but have to block
its light
with lotions, invasive trees,
awnings and umbrellas.

"But there is no income tax" they'll say.
No ransom – not even seven times seventy –
will release us from
dying
of thirst in
"paradise."