

# **THE PROSE POEM: AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL**

Volume 5 | 1996

## **An Oyster Shell** Robert Bly

© Providence College

The author(s) permits users to copy, distribute, display, and perform this work under the following conditions: (1) the original author(s) must be given proper attribution; (2) this work may not be used for commercial purposes; (3) the users may not alter, transform, or build upon this work; (4) users must make the license terms of this work clearly known for any reuse or distribution of this work. Upon request, as holder of this work's copyright, the author(s) may waive any or all of these conditions.

*The Prose Poem: An International Journal* is produced by  
The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress)  
for the Providence College Digital Commons.  
<http://digitalcommons.providence.edu/prosepoems/>

**Robert Bly**

AN OYSTER SHELL

The shell is scarred, as if it were a rushing river bottom, scratched by the great trees being carried down. Sometimes its whitish calcium has been folded over itself, as when the molten rock flows out; so something is still angry.

When we turn it over, we feel that the shell on the inside is more secretive, more finished, more human. Our fingers feel the smooth inside and know of blueberries, earned pleasure, the sweet loneliness of the old man late at night, when angels keep looking for him in the early dawn, calling across the snow-covered fields.