

THE CHAPBOOK

1995



DEEP SOUTH
Writers
CONFERENCE

**Department of English
University of Southwestern Louisiana**

SINGING

Deborah Owen Moore

John Z. Bennet Award for Poetry, Second Prize

We love as the jittering finch does,
knowing no other way.
Nothing matters but
to carry these pieces
of straw and broken shingle
through a rip in the window screen,
into the sill's corner,
to arrange them there
in the only pattern possible.
There is nothing
but again through and
back and through with more;
it doesn't matter so much what,
and still what is everything.

Everything is blind and dumb
and does not matter.
The pattern was composed ages ago.
The repetition sings
and is irresistible.
We are deaf and unteachable
and it does not matter:
we were born with this song in our ears.

We are singing in the dark and balancing
on what we cannot see.
There is no sound but this.
We are singing as loudly as we can,
as if to upper reaches, as if someone could hear
or we could understand,
as if this singing could ever change,
as if we could quiet, if that would matter,
as if singing mattered,
as if this song matters,
because it does.