

## Joan McNerney

### This long road

mud and muck  
our feet pull themselves  
into next steps so many  
sharp curves, cliffs paths  
leading nowhere but  
decay and sorrow

the wrecked poor working  
out ways to eke out a living  
fighting over nickels and dimes  
showing off their latest purchase

why did we dream up fine  
endings as we spun our days?  
how could we ever believe  
that delusion? listening to  
cats howling at night, seeing  
flowers die at first frost

there is only constant hunger  
that stabbing pain in our bellies  
which makes us join long lines  
for this bitter harvest of our lives

**Joan McNerney's** poetry is found in many literary magazines such as *Seven Circle Press*, *Dinner with the Muse*, *Poet Warriors*, *Blueline* and *Halcyon Days*. *Four Bright Hills Press Anthologies*, *several Poppy Road Review Journals* and numerous Spectrum Publications have accepted her work. Her latest title, *The Muse In Miniature*, is available on Amazon.com and Cyberwit.net. She has four Best of the Net nominations.