**Willowbrook Snapshot**

Lynn Aprill

Picture day at elementary school

is taming cowlicks and goofy grins,

buying enough pictures to:

trade with friends, gift to grandparents,

hang on the living room wall,

march up the staircase.

Today is picture day

at Willowbrook State School

(although “State School” is a misnomer,

as school intimates education).

This is Bobby Kennedy’s “snake pit.”

This is Geraldo Rivera’s “last great disgrace.”

Today is picture day,

so the babies are dressed

in cute, clean clothes

and corralled in a crib.

These are the forgotten children:

Esther, with Downs’ syndrome;

David, the severely autistic;

Adele, the microcephalic.

Doctors use uncomfortable words—

*idiot, imbecile, retarded*—

and convince frightened parents

that this is for the best.

Today is picture day at Willowbrook,

but these are pictures no parent will hang,

no child will trade, no grandparent

will share at their weekly coffee klatch.

Tomorrow will find these children

back on the floor—naked and wailing.