

## MARY CROW

### *Home Free*

This missing person  
has not returned.  
We could not find her  
all the hot afternoons  
of childhood.  
Dug in among peonies  
we watched the riverbank  
for her return,  
thinking she might come  
upstream by boat  
poised in the prow  
or walking  
through the tall grass  
with a long stick,  
come to get us.  
In the kitchen  
the deserted husk  
of her body  
went through its motions  
as we pranced around her  
invisible.  
We paraded outdoors  
and picked herbs.  
We chanted for  
the spirit's return:  
"Mother, Mother, come back,  
come back home."  
And we waited.  
Not good at waiting,  
we burned matches  
in a pile  
and sighed ghosts.  
We ran away,  
hoping for pursuit,  
hoping to be missed,  
hoping to be called home,  
but no one, nothing,  
pursued us  
and no one called,  
*Allee, allee,*  
*come home free.*