

## CAROL CAVALLARO

*Visited*

*Jackson County, Ohio*

Sustained, austerely, numb  
in sunlight, I live alone, cold  
and intellectual.  
Cooking makes me ill, the  
blood everywhere.  
The house's little heat  
steams into the air, a sweet

stew, and no one  
can see me, and there's no one  
here, two rooms,  
the bags of leaves  
bunkering the house's  
joints, a dog,  
a man sometimes.

A sweater stuffs the mouth  
of the sink,  
but underneath  
it gurgles, infantile.  
Up the road  
houses hold their hills  
more firmly.

I'm in the wind. I know  
the country well, dark signal  
by the railings in the snow,  
a frozen rug the monument  
to some perfect far distance,  
artificial deer  
white as Greek statues, having

lost the paint,  
the collapsed  
house deep in the woods  
flying up in the air,  
unloosing  
its life again.  
I wasn't ready

when the time came, for marriage  
with a man outside the window, for  
whatever visited. Winter  
has thinned my bones;  
my fingers begin

to freeze; opening  
the door, I froze

to the aluminum frame, like picking  
up an ice cube, my skin  
steely silver, mercury heavy.  
New silence peels more strips  
from the grating of my chest,  
natural, neat, peeled  
simply. The dog's

small monkey face  
cheers me as I follow  
waves that shake from trees, I grow  
balanced; I even fall  
free sometimes. The books  
staring out from the shelves  
are withdrawn

like stars in the comfort of daylight.  
They're bulk,  
a sort of holy presence,  
and they understand differences  
among things. Parting and  
bringing  
forth, I always

want my mother back;  
under our dark skins  
we were the same. That's what  
the mind can do:  
bring back the dead  
or refuse them,  
tear a baby from a womb

to leave her less like diamond.  
In a corner, in a pocket  
the mind can hold  
everything at once.  
A part of day sky,  
narrow as a ribbon, holds  
a tinny glint,

a sun.  
In the stream the few trees stoop  
a little  
growing there.

There's rain on snow,  
and a coppery  
prickling in my breasts,

pure  
vegetable.

Now my bones shake together  
like a game of hanged man  
in reverse,  
like a wooden toy on a string.  
I want to go back down the dark.