

GORDON GRIGSBY

First To Be Human
the Woman of Willendorf

Faceless, eyeless,
An empty sky,
The head, in careful
Rings of hair,
Is bent, listening
To understand
Everything outside
Is dream within.

There are no others here—
All is one—
Moon, sun, earth, stars,
Everything is hers.
She is daylight,
She the night,
Rain, air, stone, fire,
And has no name
And doesn't know herself.

Staked in the hearth
At the mouth of the cave,
She is the cave,
The labyrinth, the polished ground,
Painted animals big with young.
But deep as her thighs,
The great hips, the cleft
Of the groin barely grown free,
She emerges from earth undisguised
And looks down at herself
For ten thousand years in surprise,
Thinking, *Something is happening to me.*

Through the dark
Of gravid flesh,
She feels, lifting her pain,
The slow deliverance
Of animal life,
The slow filling in
Of something beyond every name.
They chant around her.
Their feet beat the ground.
The one clothed in stag
Antlers and pelt
Kneels to her power.
They ask for what they don't understand—
"Give us your birth."

She gives, and grows beyond them.