

THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS

*I have always depended  
on the kindness of strangers.*

Blanche Du Bois

When they've all left  
and Blanche is  
alone with  
her hunger,

                  she tries  
to remember the face  
of the curly-  
haired boy who

                          would shiver  
                          and tremble  
                          and breathe  
                          fast and slide

  close and kiss  
                          till she shuddered and held on  
                          for dear life

  like  
  drowning.

The waves  
                          of heat. How they  
both sighed

  swept away, swept  
away in-  
to that land  
of longing

                          where no  
                          body ever  
                          tells lies.

\* \*

When they've all left and Blanche in  
a peach satin pegoir  
with a cigarette

burn on its hem,  
finds a glass  
of straight Scotch,

she glides up to  
the window and opens  
her arms to the moon.

And below, in the dark street,  
Deaf Henry, Fat Charlie,  
are snickering, "That  
hard-up broad."

\* \*

When they've all left and Blanche is  
alone in the wet grass,  
her white

                    linen skirt, smudged and creased,  
hiked up over  
the thighs that  
were once white as marble,

a red smear  
in the grass,

her blouse

her breasts,  
licked to points  
by anonymous  
tongues,

turn withered  
and will not  
stay kissed.

\* \*

When they've all left and Blanche  
settles down in  
her hot bath  
and steam and My Sin

gently rise  
to surround her,  
tomorrow  
takes shape in

the mirror.  
She opens  
her dream-  
crusted eyes.

### ***32-Cornfield Review***