

A DEFINITION FOR RAPE

We didn't call it that then.  
Someone,  
attractive, tall,  
says  
"Poetry -- my place."

\* \* \*

Fat girl of eighteen  
without experience, flutter,  
the swelling hope of romance,  
flood of flowering words.

\* \* \*

Not this time.  
Just a few short stanzas,  
then the offer: pot,  
a fumbled kiss,  
the groping, bleeding,  
no waves breaking on a thundered shore,  
a much too solid hand to neck.  
The bubble breaks.

\* \* \*

We didn't call it that though.  
Instead of dinner  
it was threats and beatings,  
each unused orifice broken into,  
left with bruises,  
the neating-up after  
as though cleaning off a table  
sullied with crumbs,  
not bones and serum.

\* \* \*

You know the word just wasn't clear:  
Memory fogged over  
from the trick and tortures,  
remorseless taking of innocence and hope,  
The uncle, baby-sitter, family friend,  
handsome youth, brutal maniac,  
then sadly -- husband, too many and too often.

\* \* \*

No one called it that  
until the cracks opened up,  
and small slimy things crawled out over my lips,  
the ugly force of words of truth  
shadowed by harsh eyes,  
when last  
the larvae molted into graceful form,  
broke free from the shells and fur  
producing winged light.  
Those bruised choked lips formed perfect round words:  
"No, NO, NO!"  
and finally a quiet  
into which bright waters clean the wound.