

A Definition for Rape- 1993

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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 quiet
into which bright waters clean the wound.