

One of the Women

Dixie Partridge

One of the women inside me
cannot rejoice with anyone.
She stays in the shadows
bowing her head.
Her long hair has never been cut.

One of the women inside me
thinks of suffering
at moments of great joy, and won't eat
with the family on days of thanksgiving.
Her hands cover her eyes.

The woman waits
for companionship, but has no answers
I will believe.
I refuse to join her. Her eyes
have seen something savage,
but she is beautiful.

DIXIE PARTRIDGE, of Richland, Washington, is working on her third book of poetry. Her work has appeared in over fifty journals and reviews and in several anthologies. Her first book, Deer in the Haystacks, came out from Ahsahta Press in 1984; Watermark, her second, is in search of a publisher.

When she puts on a white garment,
consanguine tinges appear, stains
over which she toils. When I sleep,
she roams the halls as though they were mazes
connecting only with each other.
If she sleeps, she sleeps curved
around her womb.

It is she who will ruin my life,
or else save it. It is she
who makes me long at certain moments—
while cities in the distance burn—
to be turned to salt.