

## How Narrow My Escapes

I may still have been

a girl then & a cheap  
drunk watching opossums  
molest another

harvest weekend.

I went two years with no  
sex. For this the boys

declared me leaf or

cutting, plant planted  
to grow not needing it.

No one knew

where to look for me  
but who was ever looking.

I staged my portraits:

hung myself, neck out  
of view, a shade

in the making.

In the long exposures  
I clinched my flimsy

shadow,  
us doubled up in the stupid  
shirtdress

that never fit

my hips, kitten heels I'd one  
day vomit on

in Brooklyn,  
just like a real girl. Please  
don't tell

my mother  
what she already knows—I  
had to

reinvent the well,

dedicate each spade's heap  
to the starry

bottom and there

you'll find me still,  
dreaming that rain

follows the plow.

Did I year wrong? My student  
tells me

we are in the *last days*,

that God will pour out his  
seven bowls

of Armageddon,  
just punishment for the  
wicked. *The end*

*of the world is near,*  
he says, *look around and*  
*you will see the prophecy*

*fulfilled.*

I look around & see  
that making it on merit

is a wooden  
nickel and my cup  
of wine is filled with holy

air. I kept

the mouse-killing cat  
& tonight

he watches me

floss so greedily I bleed. Did  
you not know

that to anoint

someone your last love is to  
tempt them

to flight?

Alone I drink and drink  
under my cracked

lacquered  
tiles of pride. Whole days I  
send this tongue

around my teeth  
but nothing gives up its  
hiding place.

Once, I had two dreams:  
one *lazy*, the other, *away*.