When I Heard the News...

Susan Julien

Grand Valley State University

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RAIN

The human race

has

a

face

of

greed

King out in pain

the rain

is

not the rain that feeds

leaves.

---Pamela Ward

When I heard the news...

for patricia, my sister.

1.
your eyes
bounced me
through an old basketball hoop
caressed me
with a doll named cathy
cycled me
on a purple bike
to st. francis choir
sister sheila
safety squad
and well-collected holy cards
that spoke to us
on lavender nights

that moment
blew me
through a french horn
stuck me
in bubble gum
wove me
in newly bought nylons
danced me
to quartet sock hops
a touch of blush
frosted lipstick
mom's perfume
and the mirror
we used
to practice poise

(Continued)
When I heard the news… (Continued)

that day
tossed me
in album stacks
curled me
in soup can rollers
dragged me
in half-inhaled cigarettes
faded jeans
cheap wine
amber 5 a.m.'s
that withered us
like tucked away
prom corsages

2.
but I
breathed plastic
ate glass
smelled roses in hospital air

I looked for your smile
under the bed
in billy's face
on the floor
out the window
I fumbled through
get-well cards
pocker hands that scream
"I win, you lose."

(Continued)
When I heard the news... (Continued)

you touched my fingers
fear whispered through my body
it swallowed yours

streaming sugar
from bitter lips
i felt you rain insulin
heard you storm needles.

--Susan M. Julien

Before the January Thaw

You
wrapped me around your
little finger
and then
went outside without
your gloves.

--Helen Murray