

*Lyn Lifshin*

**Nights It Was Too Hot To Stay In The Apartment**

We drove to the lake, then stopped  
at my grandmother's. The grown ups  
sat in the screened porch on wicker  
or the glider whispering above the  
clink of ice in wet glass. Spirea and  
yellow roses circled the earth under  
stars. A silver apple moon. Bored  
and still sweaty, my sister and I  
wanted to sleep out on the lawn  
and dragged out our uncle's army  
blankets and chairs for a tent. We  
wanted the stars on our skin, the  
small green apples to hang over  
the blanket to protect us from bats.

From the straw mats, peonies glowed  
like planets and if there was a breeze,  
it was roses and sweat. I wanted  
our white cats under the olive green  
with us, their tongues snapping up  
moths and whatever buzzed thru the  
clover. For an hour the porch  
seemed miles away until itchy with  
bug bites and feeling our shirts fill  
with night air, my hair grow curlier,  
our mother came to fold up the blankets  
and chairs and I wished I was old  
enough to stay alone until dawn or  
small enough to be scooped up, asleep  
in arms that would carry me up the  
still hot apartment stairs and into  
sheets I wouldn't know were still  
warm until morning

**Writing Class, Syracuse Winter**

*write*, he said looking  
like an even craggier  
Lincoln, *your impressions*  
*the next 4 days, details*  
*of a walk across campus.*  
Even now I remember I  
wore a strawberry wool  
skirt, matching sweater.  
There was bittersweet  
near the Hall of Language.  
I curled in a window  
ledge of a cave in Crouse,  
an organ drifting thru  
smooth warm wood. I  
could let the wine  
dark light hold me, slid  
on the ice behind where a  
man with a blue mole  
picked me up, my notes  
scattering up Comstock.  
Torn tights, knees snow  
kissed the skin off. I was  
hypnotized by that  
huge growth, said yes  
tho I only half remembered.  
Upstairs icicles clotted,  
wrapped glass in gauze.  
There must have been some  
one who didn't call. Blue  
walls, ugly green bedspread,  
Dorothy popping gum, eating  
half a tuna sandwich before  
we'd lie in bed with the  
lights out wondering what  
it would be like to have  
Dr Fox with his red beard

*Wilderness House Literary Review 3/3*

go down on us as we  
braided and rubbed our  
mahogany hair dry and I  
tried to figure out what to  
do with the bittersweet,  
torn knees, ragged maples,  
didn't believe I'd ever  
have anything to write about