

## Photograph of a Mother

It is a strange photograph —  
a young woman in the kitchen, her face  
bitten with guilt. She is making bread  
and her white Quaker hands shape prayers  
in the dough, spill white halos of flour  
through window light.

Someone has come to take her picture

She squeezes daydreams from the nights  
he touched her and all her white blood unfrozen.  
Tiny ice splinters melt through her eyes,  
peel her white paper face.  
Her breasts are hills of snow  
smeared with his wet red love chant —  
faint splatters on the border of the print.  
She wipes her mouth with white dust fingers,  
tastes raw meat.

The shutter falls.

She keeps the framed photograph under her mattress  
and will not bring it out.  
It's as if she knows that the frozen kitchen,  
the airborne flour, the gray sphere of dough  
cannot hide the secret white fluttering of her hands —  
the angel wings over his dark back.

JOAN TAYLOR