

## WATCHING

I watched, from the stoop of my house on Summit Park, kneeling on the paint-peeled blue step where I pushed the rolled pill bugs into holes in the railing's cracked mortar and stuffed leaves after them, thinking I'd make them a home, while my mother took her nap along with the baby and told me not to bother her, that if I wouldn't sleep like I should I'd just have to amuse myself, and so I watched you pass by, Mrs. Crabbyapple from next door, as I called you because of your tree with its determined little seeders that littered the sidewalk and cracked under my feet, leaving a paste of rotten sweetness that I had to rub off on the grass before I entered the kitchen or get yelled at; I watched you march past my house, your face drawn in a net of lines, brows pointing inward, lips together as if pulled by a string on a sack and I could sense the thoughts you were keeping tied tight in there, I could see them on your face and I felt for you, even though you frowned at me in that brief moment you noticed me alone, pushing bugs between the bricks, probably wrecking things again somehow, but it wasn't that that struck me, but the way you glanced up at the front window with the white shade pulled down where my mother slept like usual, like she did every day for hours at a time, and I knew for a moment that our thoughts went to the same place and we wondered together, then you were back in your small drawn bag of worry by yourself; and I thought of how not just you and me, but everyone would do that.