

male/female roles and relationships. It culminates in a haunting and chilling poem titled "Hunger" which, based on a composite of persons and events, deals with a young child found stuffed in a refrigerator after having been sexually molested:

Breathless in plastic wrap:

*she is dressed for outdoors
in the pleated skirt
her mother gave her for Christmas
And in a brown sweater, its bulky
knit
camouflaging her sex,
breasts a boy might have,
tender breasts,
pink and sweet as cinnamon hearts.
In a fridge, like a foetus folded
into that white space
where all dreams end
where she has been made to be
of man unborn.*

At their best, the poems are pervaded with sensual and erotic flower imagery that speaks evocatively of love, sexual desire and womanhood. The poet decries "wild flowers [that] fade fast... droop in a man's pocket/with flagging desire," opposed to "prairie lilies [that] stalk the fields/sparkled, hungry as wildcats," sunflowers that "don't die easily," whose "centre firm" is "a power that won't let go, a dynasty of the field that's heart/harvesting love enough/to feed a nation." Nowhere is the poet more jubilant than in the unrestrained celebration of motherhood: "I can't live without this child in my arms./A spray of crimson gladiola."

The poems in this volume are tough and questioning as they thrust from past to present in their exploration of the poet's identity as artist, as mother, as woman. They are the work of a woman who, "immune to gravity," is now ready to soar!

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THREE POEMS BY MICHELLE HOGAN-WALKER

Illustrations by George A. Walker



The Party

you're in with
her tint on
your lips
you're smiling in
the door at me
how was the party you're dying
for me to ask you
I keep folding keep counting keep
silence
I hold the fact of your leaving
against you like a knife

It's for you, Henry

when it rains,
in the sculptor's garden
his ladies collect
water in their laps.
puddles of rain
in the folds of their
dresses
they stand and sit
and half lie down
"For you, Henry" they
tell him in very old voices
"our knees are up for you,
Henry, you have seen
the secret of Mother."
He probably
always blushes when they
tell him this part
but he always knows
they forgive him
for the rain in their skirts and
even for not giving
them any pockets to put
Kleenex in
"this is how it's always been,
Henry, you put rain
in our skirts
where it's really always been."



[untitled]

there's sometimes peace in holding you
a calmness a passionate quiet
I want an embrace that will lock our
ribs
and let me in where your life radiates
from
I want to be half of a double exposure
but
I want all of me in the picture