

*Paula David*

## SUNDAY MORNING

...

thunder faced you hold your children  
babbling brooks protected from  
the flood of daddy's fears  
by strong arms  
that grip your little girl  
talkative accusing daddy I want to come home  
as your eyes trail her mother  
man eyes  
a dyke that holds back the deluge  
your son tugs at your collar  
so close to your heart  
pulls it up to his mouth  
sucks saturates it with saliva  
you glance down  
so close to your heart

not sure that the wetness has come from his mouth  
and your daughter's fingers crawl up your neck  
insy winsy spider  
you pull your children closer  
shields  
as their mother wheels the shopping cart past  
her upper body rigid  
impaled by the javelins in your eyes  
her refusal to look is  
her shield  
fragile as paper  
and you are both forced to conduct  
this jousting match of shame and guilt and anger and  
love  
in the arena of C.K. Greaves supermarket  
in a country so small that  
a man has no place to hurt  
except in full view  
in a country so small that  
a man has no place to forgive  
except in full view  
in a country so small that  
love is weakness and  
forgiveness weaker still

so a man must hurt rather than forgive  
what women must forgive everyday  
and because your dyke is so deep and  
so wide reinforced by steel honed  
in a country so small that  
all pain is communal  
the deluge changes course  
and forces its way through  
the channel of my eyes

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