

Step Child

by Sarah Hill

I have labored to bring you here
as I have for those whose eyes reflect my own,
although you were laid upon me whole.
I have studied and worried silently over
the strange tilt of your chin,
the unfamiliar curve of your smile.
I have wished to shake them from your face.
to mold your features into something I can see
and know when I see it.

We smell foreign to each other.
The touch of my hand is rough on your skin
and you slide out away from me.
Our conversation runs past itself,
drips thickly down the walls,
and dies on the floor.

I love you
like an artwork in stone—
not of my creation,
senseless to my touch.

The public library— 12:00 p.m.

by Jennifer Aikman

Old men, young mothers and babes
And a closed-mouthed
card catalog
No sssshhh need apply.