

Fire

William Creighton

Macys
weathered
second-hand
carried proudly
one handle broken
in December when *The Times* might be scarce
when she saved up seven issues
two Sundays
in preparation for the cold
the weight
proved too much for the bag
and the burden
too much for the woman
she realized
that the only cold that touched her
through a tattered wool coat
and layers of *The Times*
came from
inside
the only fire
thawed memories of misfortune
except
for a tiny silver ring on her finger
given to her by Madame Sinclair
outside
the Rivoli's backstage door
as Madame retreated
into a
waiting
limousine