

The Prey

The hunter pins down
 its prey
 Holds it so it can't
 break free
 Gags it so it can't
 scream
 The hunter's object
 penetrates his prey
 works it around
 within the prey
 At first a little power
 behind the motions
 faster—quicker
 More strength.
 Finally, the hunter lets
 the prey take a final
 gasp of air
 Scream
 As the hunter's final
 dig penetrates with all
 his might into the prey
 The hunter lets up his grasp
 He looks into its eyes
 Steps back
 Observes
 As his prey lies still
 Violated by this stranger.

--Tawnee Shallenberger

Imaginations of My Sister, Age Six

Blue hexagons mark child stepping stones
 on the green worn water-carpet.
 Rippling shadow-creatures bare imaginary
 fangs and rough pointed scales.
 Balanced precariously on a tiny shoeless sockless foot
 poised on a hexagon island, arms wavering
 outward, dancing a tightrope walk
 is my sister, age six.
 Peering fearfully, intently at the murky green
 from beneath long unkept brown bangs.
 Danger, she knows should a single toe splash
 Off the blue into the stormy, infested waters.
 She is centered in the room
 halfway through her journey. Her pace quickens
 stone-skipping from left to right.
 The bathroom door is only two more steps
 (She has to go)
 She jumps—lands on her right
 left flails in the air
 she lunges for the threshold
 knees smack tile and arms fling for tub wall
 she strains and holds her toes
 hanging over the sea
 and safe.

--Jim Zeigler