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Snatches

Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg

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Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg
1357 N. 1000 Road
Lawrence, Kansas 66046
913/843-0253

Snatches

*

She eats soup in the corner,
her slim back curving
into the scoop of her spoon, her tipped head
bobbing slightly. "I'm better
at this size," she says. "This
is the real me."

*

He didn't exactly rape her,
it wasn't penetration, they wore
clothes, it *was* on her couch--
a moment of insanity, he'd say later,
a mistake, a split-second of
snatching her body, pressing hard
against it, then apologizing,
"Please, please don't leave me.
Let me give you a massage."

*

Her mother dipped her head
in boiling oil.
"This is not what ordinary people do,"
she said years later.

17 operations and still,
she can't wear her hair
pulled back.

*

(continued)

Goldberg, "Snatches," p.2

He broke the window
in the hatchback outside her house,
thinking it belonged
to her new boyfriend.
The next day he left
a five-gallon bucket of peaches.

*

The much-publicized two-and-a-half-year-old
is transferred today--one set of parents
as good as another, but this time
blood wins over history. The child rides
in an airplane with a lawyer
who says, "your new name is . . . "