

PLUMS (1989)

Karen brings plums
from her garden —
fallen
or ripened on the tree,
bird pecked; all
go into the same brown bag.

For years she has brought
these aging, not yet rotten
gifts of fruit,

as though a sackful
of softly oozing plums
could save us from
despair;

all harvest summer they come ...

plums like small sacred organs
removed

in Sumeria
a violation of plums
the sweet, dully thudding avalanche

and whether we eat them
or not

they putrify

SANS 11

(The Whitney Museum)

They are rectangular
boxes
of opaline fiberglass

pure as honeycomb pure
and stable as wasp hive

molded
20 years ago
yet seem old

old and gather
dust in corners

24
boxes in 2 horizontal rows
of 12

each bisected
by a 1/4"
line

Step back and watch it glow
like amber

as if a great wall of scrolls
were touched by burnt
rain;

even the shallows unreadable

Dead at 34 was Eva Hesse

— Thomas Avena

San Francisco CA

A MOTHER'S DAY

My child brings me
tiny packages covered
with wrapping paper
he painted only moments before,

as I try to convince my own mother
that it's all right to take back
the robe and slippers without
hurting my feelings.

My husband makes his annual claim
that I'm not his mother,
exempting him
from cards and gifts.

We spend most of the day and night
trying to get through
the circuit lines to Buffalo
to wish his mother a happy day.
By ten-thirty we get through
and make all the necessary small talk
that gets my husband yawning
and ready for bed.