

THE SET UP

the flower & plant lady gives me the eye,
she has a rottweiler chained in her lawn
& i've seen rather large, muscular looking
men emerging from her house late at night;
she gives me the eye
(this is not the first time)
as she digs in the box for her mail;
on the other side of the street
i walk past her with half a hard-on
pretending not to notice her.

— Todd Kalinski

Lincoln NE

AND LOTS OF WAVY HAIR LIKE LIBERACE

Every day after school
Marion and Naomi came to my house
and I played 45s of the Maguire Sisters,
the Chordettes, the Platters, and Etta James,
and we sang, or lip-synced the too-
high and low notes, and shoved each other
for the middle of the mirror
hanging on my living room wall.

I guess we imagined fame,
whatever that meant back then,
a white Cadillac, a white fox stole, maybe,
until the right guy came along
and bought us a tract home
and appliances, which is what
happened to Marion, but not to
Naomi and me, us armed with
Geiger counters for Mr. Wrong,
and Naomi's trouble with tumors.

For a year, though,
in front of my living room mirror,
Marion, Naomi, and I were all three
beautiful and perfect,
our songs made nightingales croak,
and we were the stars of the Ed Sullivan Show,
brought to you coast-to-coast,
memorable, vibrant, and fragile,
as black and white
kinescope recording.