



Leslie Monsour

(1948-)

Emily's Words (1990)

Unsquandered, sure and quiet as a root,
She stayed at home all dressed in pleated white,
And accurately weighed the brain of God,
The sum of acts not carried out. Unwed,
That she not be divided, she stayed whole,
And heard the sound the tooth makes in the soul.
A little knife that cuts through at a slant,
Her voice, a child's, ungendered, wasn't meant
For 'Our Fathers' murmured under Sunday trees,
But rang like axe strokes on the frozen seas.
'Called back,' she wrote, the mourners treading so,
That from her gypsy face a light broke through.
She died in May, and one thing struck them all:
The coffin was astonishingly small.