

"Lot's Wife"

Kristine Batey

While Lot, the conscience of a nation,
struggles with the Lord,
she struggles with the housework.
The City of Sin is where
she raises the children.
Ba'al or Adonai--
Whoever is God--
the bread must still be made
and the doorsill swept.
The Lord may kill the children tomorrow,
but today they must be bathed and fed.
Well and good to condemn your neighbors' religion,
but weren't they there
when the baby was born,
and when the well collapsed?
While her husband communes with God,
she tucks the children into bed.
In the morning, when he tells her of the judgment,
[that is, God's decision to destroy the city]
she puts down the lamp she is cleaning
and calmly begins to pack.
In between bundling up the children
and deciding what will go,
she runs for a moment
to say goodbye to the herd,
gently patting each soft head
with tears in her eyes for the animals that will not understand.
She smiles blindly to the woman
who held her hand at childbed.
It is easy for eyes that have always turned to heaven
not to look back;
those who have been--by necessity--drawn to earth
cannot forget that life is lived from day to day.
Good, to a God, and good in human terms
are two different things.
On the breast of the hill, she chooses to be human,
and turns, in farewell--
and never regrets
the sacrifice.