

The Curse of the Mirror
or
Trials of a Good-looking Teenager

This smile—
Bad-mood clerks smile back.
Teenage and not-so-teenage boys rediscover chivalry.
Their mothers decide this girl is the One.

These eyes—
Not green-green, but the green a chameleon might chose crossing a summer lawn
Made brilliant by the white-white-clean-living whites and lush-black model blacks.

This skin—
Has an extra layer, a luminescent covering
To magnify the pinks and pearls just below.
Only Merle Norman benefits when you put make-up on skin like this.

This hair—
The swimming-summer Barbie-doll hair has given way to strawberry perfection.
The top stylist in the salon asks to do this hair.
This is hair that will perform like pictures in the style book.
This is hair that for an hour will redeem your choice of profession.

This body—
Surely modeled as the draped female in a distant Greek's garden,
Just slightly smaller than life size.
A jock-model:
Dress her for the gymnastics hall, the ski slopes, the ice rink, the volleyball net in the sand.

But this child—
Is cursed
With a jealous, mean-minded mirror.
This mirror says You're the ugliest of them all.
This mirror turns her hair to hay and
Makes her tummy bulge.
Zits will blossom momentarily
Amid visions of iron-laced teeth.

And this child—

Sighs and moans, bemoans her face, her fate,
Spends hours imploring the mirror to reverse its verdict.
And turns in a green glower and says to her mother
Can I sue you because I look like this?