

SNAILS

Walking to school my sister and I, down the long dusty road
in the stillness of an early summers morning.
Fig and almond trees on either side of the road, green, and lush
with the promise of sweet, sticky, warm juices dribbling
over our fingers, down our chins.
Sisters, close in age yet universes away. Sibling rivalry at its worst
rivalry for a mothers un-comparing, unconditional love.
Sisters. Angry, spiteful, poking hurtful probes in the tender spaces of our hearts
Scuffling feet, swinging school bags, eyes peeled for an additional leverage
to cause pain with. Something to break through the outer calm.
Carelessly tossed comment "I love these little snails, how they crawl so slowly up the road." Wonderful weapon,
compassion, caring, every thing that is being stamped out
in a slow, insidious process of "divide and conquer." Exhilarating sense of freedom, meanness.
Walking to school my sister and I down the long dusty road
in the stillness of an early summers morning.
A trail of delicate snail shells, crushed beyond recognition by hurt, angry, spiteful little feet.

Stephanie Douglas

