

A fan suspended from the ceiling
by a long pipe
slowly turns the air over
as the druggist ponders our unspoken question.

I can't sell you time, he says finally.
Somehow, you've got to turn this flood of vegetation
to your advantage.
He points to our seats—
you see, these are real mushrooms.

THE LIBRARY

We can't give her books away,
I tell my sister.
The library is all we have left of our mother.
From it we should gain
a deep and varied understanding of her mind.

As we wind among its shelves,
I clean the plaster from a book at random.
Inside—
our mother's name and address inscribed
in faded ink above a map of Pompeii.

Do you think we should even be here,
my sister whispers.
What if we find something we don't want to know.
She stares at a shrine to Priapus.

I'm not sure what you mean, I reply
rather stiffly.
Oh stop it, she says. Here's one on gardens.

Where does this passage lead,
my sister's voice booms from ahead—

the shelves on either side
have ended . . .

When we open the door to our town,
a man moves from its step.
I wonder why he always sits so close
to the entrance, my sister asks softly.

Maybe we should make him our librarian,
since he seems to get so much pleasure
from books.

I still don't see how we entered the cave,
I muse, lost in my own thoughts . . .

As we pass a post set in concrete
to divide our town from the wilderness,
the cry of a bird
tolls in the empty steeple of the school.

I wonder if you would allow me
into your library, the man
who has followed us interrupts politely.

I'm looking for a sky which has pulled down
its high ceilings
and its hard-to-heat rooms,
a sky which has moved into a child's book,
so it may be touched everyday.