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## Kate's Place

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## **KATE'S PLACE**

I have looked at her now  
two years at lunch wearing  
the pale yellow uniform.  
On certain days I change  
her clothes. She's better off  
not knowing how it feels  
to own one smart tweed.  
The picture I want would shatter  
space between us. It is better  
to paint her at home, forget  
the professors, the students  
waiting in line. She is the wife  
of a streetcar conductor  
or a shepherd. She covers  
her head with black silk  
for mass. She doesn't smile  
but I would give her strong teeth  
at night, shadow deep veins  
for making love. She doesn't know  
I exist. I sketch in the shape  
of things and leave. I eat  
at other counters. I compare notes.  
There is no one else like her.  
A man orders apple pie. His eye  
is too pale to work in her face.  
I search for good lines at coffee  
breaks, study texture and color  
like maps that direct me to the end  
of day where the canvas stretches  
and only the outline is sure.