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Playgrounds

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Playgrounds

When I was in grammar school
we had to play dodgeball at recess.
I hated it.

Standing with the other girls inside the circle,
waiting for the ball to hit me,
I tried to pay attention to the game.
But I couldn't remember to raise my hands when the ball came.
I couldn't tell when it was coming at me anyway.
So the red ball would bounce up
and smash my glasses into the bridge of my nose.
I had a bruise there till high school.

I would stand with my arms hanging down,
sniffing back blood, wondering
how the other girls knew
to turn when the ball came at them.

This guy who's a friend of mine now
can't take Rorschach tests.
He likes to look at the inkblots,
but he has to lie.

He knows what he really sees
is not something he can tell a shrink.

What Dimitrius sees
are naked women
sitting on xerox machines,
pushing the copy buttons,
rearranging themselves on the glass
and pushing the copy buttons
again and again.

Leigh Kirkland