I Join the Women of Churchhill College

Robin S. Chapman
I JOIN THE WOMEN OF CHURCHILL COLLEGE

Beside me, the barebreasted girl with braids, 
a warrior's stance, gazes stonily across the hall; 
her older sister, firm-bellied blue-marbled nude, 
waits at the Fellows’ back door, beside 
the stats of office. On the wall, a woman 
sleepwalks through her charcoal portrait. 
In the Senior Commons Room, another nude, 
small, curls up in languorous bronzed sleep 
by the stationery and blotting pad. 
At dinner, the girl in the tartan skirt 
bangs the dishes and snaps her oversize 
rubber gloves, impatient to do the washing up 
while I'm still eating my visitor's pudding. 
The Fellows linger, talking The Critique 
of Pure Reason, quantum tunneling. 
Outside the Hall, opposite Churchill's bust 
glowering in black depression, the last 
of the beautiful nudes, life-size, sits and weeps, 
er her face in her hands.