

Lesley Walter

FIRST FALL

for Charlotte

Daddy's fingers
probe-press-flick,
it flies in the air,
it falls on the floor.
We fall to our knees—
all five of us, searching
frantically.

In a flurry of excitement
she rushes off
to find the china fairy pot
in which to pop her prize:
her first.

Her proud-shy smile
reveals a gap—
sorely tender ...

I stare
at the minuscule ivory spade
which nestles in my palm.
I strain
to catch its faintly whispered,
slightly lisped farewells.
Then turn.

I study anti-poaching laws
lock the doors
put gauze on the windows
block up the chimney,
in a last desperate bid
to fend off patient
but very determined fairies.

28