

PORTRAIT

A row of grinning oval heads
(malignant eyed,
spiked with nose and hair and teeth),
drawn in childish black wash
and pinned, approvingly,
upon the classroom wall.

At first I took them
all for witches,
not for the demon mothers
they were meant to be,
each the product of
a child-like regard.

Now, as I recall
their staring eyes and hair,
I see their truth
and offer them,
as mute apology,
to you.

Loving portraits all —
brushed with heartfelt care;
configured like the beast.