

## The Local Police Report

*Marilyn Bushman-Carlton*

At sixteen, I'm listening  
to the sounds of a fractured frame house:

my older sister sobbing  
over hard news  
about a religious leader she has long admired,

and Mother saying absolutely nothing  
so deliberately  
the whole neighborhood can hear.

She's ripping worn towels into rags,  
twisting from them dirtied water,

scouring previously perfect patterns  
from the kitchen linoleum,  
and in such swift circles  
veins I didn't know she had  
pop up and scowl.

To the tune of Eileen's sorrow,  
she scrapes picked-over food  
into the smelly trash,  
fork tines squealing against plates,

then turns to bludgeon the risen white dough.  
She chops carrots, potatoes, celery  
with her sharpest steel knife,  
and skins the onions. Oh, the many onions  
she drops, tears splashing,  
into the boiling pot.