

Frame, an Epistle

By Claudia Emerson

Most of the things you made for me—blanket-
chest, lapdesk, the armless rocker—I gave
away to friends who could use them and not
be reminded of the hours lost there,
not having been witness to those designs,
the tedious finishes. But I did keep
the mirror, perhaps because like all mirrors,
most of these years it has been invisible,
part of the wall, or defined by reflection—
safe—because reflection, after all, does change.
I hung it here in the front, dark hallway
of this house you will never see, so that
it might magnify the meager light,
become a lesser, backward window. No one
pauses long before it. But this morning,
as I put on my overcoat, then straightened
my hair, I saw outside my face its frame
you made for me, admiring for the first
time the way the cherry you cut and planed
yourself had darkened, just as you said it would.

Dear Michael (25)

By Mark McMorris

If poetry is not bread

to fortify the righteous

is it because we miss

in it the savor of contest

the whisper of blessing

over a martyr's name

the light of sacral plans

to take the citadel once

and for all, or give it up?

On the original streets

lit by the sun of nineteenth-

century novels the workers

are gathering to march

for their dignity and bread.

The planters did not die

of happiness. Other exhibits

show their meadows

their horses and women

the English sunset in lands never more than a sigh

like a vowel far from home.

We ask too much when of

the little that we have.

In good health fondly yours.