

KATHLEEN KEMP HAYNES

The Strap

the hand that held the strap
was indifferent to my pain
again and again, eyes watching
for my tears.

my transgression was refusal
to tell what I knew
about another student's actions.
I would not squeal.

the class I stood before, while
the strap turned my wrists bloody,
sat hushed and watching for me
to give in.

the other strappings I took
broke my spirit finally.
I always feel guilty and sorry
for everything I do since then.

girls should be compliant
and obedient, and ladies, they said.
I was a rebel then, but
ever since, scarred and scared.

a strapping at school,
followed by a beating at home,
in the end I had lost
all the spunk I had.

what could I have
done with my life?

*Kathleen Kemp Haynes is a Dorchester, Ontario poet
and great-grandmother.*

DESI DI NARDO

Ladybug Languished

Laggard old decrepit beetle
Sitting idly biding time
You have wasted dots away
In your languid, sluggish way
Of sitting for hours
Didn't you know you were
Spotted?

Peeking, peering, peeping
Pry

Open your gauze winged-body

And surge forward

Do not turn back

Coast, coast away

To new states

And start again

(I do not say fresh)

But start again

Lady,

Bug someone else

Add new spots to

Your flabby flanks

Nothing's changed for you

Except the place

Accept the place

And worry not

For you will be remembered

In one brief panting breath

Of an ugly fitful dream

Hovering

As the

Lady Queen

Ladybird

Desi DiNardo's poems appear earlier in this issue.