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## Jeanne Marie Plouffe

Lyn Lifshin

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**Lyn Lifshin**

**Jeanne Marie Plouffe**

(after reading Carolyn Forché)

Small and dark behind your mother's full skirts  
as she cleaned other people's houses.  
Florence and I imagined worms slithered thru you  
when you ate lumps of sugar in my grandmother's  
bathroom, still stayed thin. Eyes like cloves

under huge lashes in classes you wouldn't say  
a word in. *Canuck* the boys called out  
over Otter Creek Bridge as your legs got less  
spindly and the girls from college professors'  
homes didn't invite you. People said your last name

with the tone they'd say tramp. Your skin creamy,  
your hair curled with night. There wasn't a boy  
who didn't think he could put his hand inside  
your dress. You never said anything,  
as if a part of you was already gone,

as if there was some place to go. Once,  
singing of Quebec, your eyes gleamed like the gold  
cross boys yanked from your neck and tossed in the snow.  
I hear the trailer burned down, the survivors  
headed north. Jeanne Marie, if you read this

please write me