

1972

The Periphery

Ruth Stone

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Stone, Ruth. "The Periphery." *The Iowa Review* 3.2 (1972): 105-106. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.1358>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

Love was touch and unity.
Parting and joining. The Trinity
Was flesh, the mind and the will to be.
The world grew through me like a tree.

Flesh was the citadel. But Rome
Was right as rain. From my humble home
I walked to the scaffold of pain, and the dome
Of heaven wept for her sensual son
Whom the Romans slew.

Was it I who was old when you hung, my Jew?
I shuffled and snuffled and whined for you.
And the child climbed up where the dead tree grew
And slowly died while she wept for you.

The *goyim* wept for the beautiful Jew.

Ruth Stone

S A G U A R O

Buttoned up, nailed, exactly riveted ribs
Coming together at the top of the idiot head
With a bloom and pale shock of what might be hair.
Don't endanger yourself, but feel that green skin.
They're so human. The stubs at the ends
Of those beseeching arms with little fruits
Like maimed fingers. And the high whistle
Air makes rushing up those spines. You feel
That presently when they have grown more arms
They will be useful. Do something. March in file.
Ruth Stone

T H E P E R I P H E R Y

You are not wanted
I said to the older body
Who was listening near the cupboards.
But outside on the porch
They were all eating.
The body dared not
Put its fingers in its mouth.
Behave, I whispered.
You have a wart on your cheek
And everyone knows you drink.
But that's all right, I relented,

It isn't generally known
How clever you are.
I know you aren't appreciated.
The body hunted for something good to eat
But the food had all been eaten by the others.
They laughed together carelessly outside the kitchen.
The body hid in the pantry near the refrigerator.
After a while it laughed, too.
It listened to all the jokes and it laughed.

SHOTGUN WEDDING

The bride is not yet married to the groom.
Caught in the last pose of a matron's dream,
She is a father's nightmare of illusion.
Trailing ribbons of gauzy particles,
The bridegroom's chariot
Exhorts the maidenly throngs
In fireworks, explosions!
They approach the zenith
Rowing the air like a pair of swans
With blood-red eyes.
In snowy plumage, restive,
With folded wings
They tender themselves, ready to leap
And spread their fans to the showy entrances.
The musical anguish and anti-joy
Rumble in earth like thunder of fissures;
Warning too late of the descent
Into the anxious fingers and mouths
Of the hungry tribe.

Ruth Stone