

1975

The Phone Calls

Joan Swift

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

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Swift, Joan. "The Phone Calls." *The Iowa Review* 6.3 (1975): 54-55. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.1909>

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.

eternally hidden under the rocks
You enjoyed the quietness of the raindrops falling into the pans.
Each drop has vengeance in it. We sat all night
speculating on the baleful spray.

We floated on the big bed like crystal madness.
You liked the flights of those lost pencils and fluid
and wind between your lips, stinging and drinking it in
Now we will overlap like the ancients with their chains
Shaking them each day, as they are tightened more strongly.

And the fountain ran on, step by step freely falling
And we loved the swath of the evening
You against the balustrade of detested tin
And I leaned against the riddled curtain of your breast.

You hid beneath the grillework roses with a hundred fears.
You suggested to your little patient that I judge the
height of these roses.

You tore and tore and buried your teeth in me, but
I couldn't let go.

Under the rainy rainbow we would lie and struggle like sparks.

The Phone Calls / Joan Swift

I want to sleep a whole night
but your voice comes wearing its hood
and the quick dark shoes of three a.m.
to wake up the sky like lightning
swinging its whips.
Each night you arrive with your black dahlia.

You send hate, you send hate
like a vine up any wire.
Your words race from pole to pole
toward . . . toward . . .
do you know why it is me?

The walls of my room are no solace.
You writhe out of the plastic and into my brain
like smoke through a crevice.
Night is your pond to fish in.
Your bait is a bell tossed overboard.

Do you know the sea?
Sometimes it rages so its waves stand
up like trees.
Yet its bells ring for safety.
And its tongues lie down on sand.

Green Stone with a White Heart / Joan Swift

I have for you a kind of valentine
I found on the beach.
Either the waves wanted those millions
of stones and kept coming back for them
or the ocean was trying to get away
and the pebbles were following.
They were the colors of all the animals
and all the eyes. They were lying
together like the parts of speech.

Here is one as green as the face
of a seasick woman I saw once
where she lay at the bottom
of the engine room stairs,
not wanting to fish anymore.
On its concave side is a white
heart, some harder compound
whose equation keeps out the sea.
Each time the wind blew or a wave
passed over, it stepped a little
further into the sunlight
and is now in your hand.