



1990

## Homage to White Bread, circa 1956

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### Recommended Citation

Garland, Max. "Homage to White Bread, circa 1956." *The Iowa Review* 20.1 (1990): 56-57. Web.  
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.3843>

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feathers, a limp body  
none of us was hungry for.

Because a little blood on the hands  
is good for a boy, a little extra  
meanness might save his life,  
we were shooting the doves.  
The hitch in their flight,  
the unpredictable swerving  
made it almost seem fair  
because we were terrified  
of the recoil, and the bruises  
kept deepening in the hollows  
of our right shoulders  
as we shot the doves,  
because we drove our father's cars,  
because we were our father's sons.  
The river was slate-grey, murmured  
and lapped into the willows  
that marked the state line  
that bordered the field  
where we were shooting the doves  
because a boy must murder something,  
because a boy must be implicated.

### HOMAGE TO WHITE BREAD, CIRCA 1956

It was called *Bunny Bread* in Kentucky;  
from the cellophane, a cartoon rabbit  
aimed a smile at my sister and me.

This was before the cult of the body,  
before whole wheat, before fiber.  
This was bread as white  
as the bedsheets tugging at the line,  
as white as the soul ascending;

as insubstantial as the fields  
passing across the windows of cars,  
yet bread re-attaining, in the throat,  
the consistency of wet dough;

which we loved, my sister and I,  
a rare agreement, in fact,  
as we clawed through the rivalries,  
children of such bread.

This was the bread of television,  
of styrofoam, of prayer  
refined to the point of memory,  
such as, "Give us this day. . . ."

*White bread, snowfall, fleece;*  
this was bread to soften the blow  
when the time to remember came.  
Bread of persuasion. Bread like a filter  
through which only the innocents pass,  
bread of the hand that writes it so.