

1996

# The Retrieval

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## Recommended Citation

Wayne, Jane O. "The Retrieval." *The Iowa Review* 26.1 (1996): 118-118. Web.  
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.4533>

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## THE RETRIEVAL

To picture that day,  
you have to stand above your own sleep  
until you are only a shadow  
that falls across a table,  
the nearly-drowned they're getting ready  
to pull out of the deep.  
Sometimes you go back  
to that shock of pinkish-gray  
in a jar on the vet's shelf  
or for the shape  
you conjure up a hybrid form  
that someone holds mid-air,  
a cross between a valentine  
and some hot-water bottle  
that's not quite full, that you imagine  
lukewarm to the touch and flopping slightly  
in those upturned palms.  
Then suddenly—  
as if you opened your eyes  
when the gloved hands lifted it out of you  
and someone else poured ice water  
into the red basin of your chest—  
there's a moment  
when, like sugar sprinkled onto frothy milk,  
it sits lightly on your mind  
before it sinks.