

1990

Long, Disconsolate Lines

Jane Cooper

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

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Cooper, Jane. "Long, Disconsolate Lines." *The Iowa Review* 20.2 (1990): 42-42. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.3877>

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.

Long, Disconsolate Lines · *Jane Cooper*

in memory of Shirley Eliason Haupt

Because it is a gray day but not snowy, because traffic grinds by
 outside,
because I woke myself crying help! to no other in my bed and no god,
because I am in confusion about god,
because the tree out there with its gray, bare limbs is shaped like
 a lyre,
but it is only January, nothing plays it, no lacerating March sleet,
no thrum of returning rain,
because its arms are empty of buds and even of protective snow,
I am in confusion, words harbor in my throat, I hear not one confident
 tune,
and however long I draw out this sentence
it will not arrive at any truth.

It's true my friend died in September and I have not yet begun to
 mourn.
Overnight, without warning, the good adversary knocked at her door,
the one she so often portrayed
as a cloud-filled drop out of the cave's mouth, crumpled dark of an old
 garden chair. . . .
But a lyre-shaped tree? yes, a lyre-shaped tree. It's true that at
 twenty-four
in the dripping, raw Iowa woods
she sketched just such a tree, and I saw it, fell in love with its
 half-heard lament
as if my friend, in her proud young skin, already thrashed by the
 storm-blows ahead,
had folded herself around them,
as if she gave up nothing, as if she sang.