Girls at Confirmation

Gail Shepherd

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview
Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.4068

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.
Two Poems · Gail Shepherd

GIRLS AT CONFIRMATION

They are scraps of lace, a dressmaker’s ribbon unspooled, despoiled. From where the congregation stands they’re grained with dust and distance. That first communion, its discomfitting clichés: demure hands,

the rustle of best dresses, a flurry as angel-moths flutter up the aisle toward a myth of heavenly incandescence, each pretty mouth open for the tang of flesh and blood. As if

suffering could be traded with such innocence!

Seen from above, through God’s fish-eye lens:
the girls in marriage whites, their parents
a blur of benevolence under the granite saint’s

grey-blue regard, his oriental smile on the verge of sensuality. Dome-light rests its lance gently on the priest’s shoulder. And hands
press host to tongue, hands urge

them back into the sun again. Already, in a borrowed car,
and out all afternoon, perhaps on Lovers’ Hill,
they sit remotely, overlooking the stagger of houses and spires, feeling dreamy, restless, evil.