

2007

Sarah Good, Imprisoned, 1692

Rebecca Dunham

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Recommended Citation

Dunham, Rebecca. "Sarah Good, Imprisoned, 1692." *The Iowa Review* 37.3 (2007): 90-90. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.6264>

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REBECCA DUNHAM

Sarah Good, Imprisoned, 1692

—to her daughters, Dorcas & nursing baby

I never set some broken knife's steel
blade to the afflicted, even as teal
tight, they flock the pews, twisted eel-

like & crying. Milk daughters, I harbor
you, my own two yellow birds. Burr
my flesh, my familiars. Suck the meat or

sweat from between my fingers & spile
me. Dorcas Good, I forgive you your pile
of lies, the suckling snake you claim I

gave you, its flea-sized bite's red mark.
Listen, little nameless one. Do not arc &
squirm away. I am no more a rock

for woman to pitch against woman
than witch or hag. Motherhood's an omen
that pricks & pinches, a needling in

the gut, drenching us all in blood-soaked
rags that we change in a privy's oak
dark shame, & oh, we are all afflicted.