

The Old Green House

Elizabeth Rollins

The leather skin of her Amplified Bible cracked
like the scaly tips of her gentle hands,
her wise words pouring like syrup from her soft lips.
The cement steps to the porch cooled my bare feet
as they bathed under the oak's shady shower.
A fresh bouquet of the red spider flowers
sprouted from my fist as I sat hip-to-hip next to her
on the rotting planks of the porch.
Large black ants tip-toed over the porch's splitting wood
in search of sandwich crumbs on our deserted paper plates
while cars buzzed along the highway
like mosquitoes in the thick humidity of Louisiana air.
The oak leaves, the color of steamed snap beans,
hissed in the intoxicating breeze.

“Love the Lord, Your God,” she chirped
as her hand squeezed my freckled knee.
She gathered manna from
the inky pages at her fingertips,
feasting on their truth.

And I, like a baby bird,
pecked at her beak to feast
and fill my growing stomach.