

## *Girls*

LINSEY MORSE

learn at very young ages  
that outer beauty is the water—  
oasis in the desert they crave.

They are taught  
to smile in plaster of Paris,  
hypocrites behind closed doors.  
They cut themselves in secret, starve  
for passion.

Each young lady  
feigning optimism  
and poise, accepts her place  
below male fantasies,

above the unsightly.  
They learn to heave aside the weak, to shun the strong  
and not to trust anyone,  
in a world of facades,  
mascara  
and hair spray.