

1970

The Alligators

Michael Van Walleghen

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

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Van Walleghen, Michael. "The Alligators." *The Iowa Review* 1.2 (1970): 22-22. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.1050>

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.

THE ALLIGATORS

Feigning sleep,
to the casual eye
more dead than alive,
they wait. On them,
like a dinner plate
forever dropping,
all things depend.
One sees it clearly
in the eyes
of certain women.
After a time
not even their children
can pull them away.
I have seen them
standing tensely there
as at a window:
my mother
my grandmother looking out
one hand floating absently
among the dishes,
and the sink, the sink
soft-sucking things
it can't quite swallow.
I have seen them standing there
as rigidly as birds
who feel too late
the almost imperceptible
undulation of stagnant water.
When at last
they lift their heads
I've felt the whole zoo listen:
a neighborhood at dark
listening to streetcars
the far factories whistling
children, a lifetime
the perfectly indifferent
closing in.