

Masthead Logo

The Iowa Review

Volume 6

Issue 3 *Summer-Fall*

Article 36

1975

Estates

Pamela Stewart

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

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Stewart, Pamela. "Estates." *The Iowa Review* 6.3 (1975): 52-53. Web.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.1907>

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.

and always felt that horn
twist in her side—

ghostly as the one that tore my brother
and gored and gored him since the age of five
when I was born, he imagined his darling mother
forsaking him
to bring me home alive.

Estates / Pamela Stewart

*They are rivals—the Northern Lights and
this white melon in its black cane-chair.*

—Emily Dickinson

I am noticing from my window how the grass
Must be startled by my sister lifting
Bundles of straw to spread over
The carrots and turnips. Now November,
And last evening it was Father
Who saw it first, down on the common. He
Ran across to sound the church bells.
Everyone coming out of their houses
From supper onto the lawns
Watched the sky. Purple
And bronze, unlike any jewels or cloth I know.
I saw it from this window, the way the trees
Were black and terrible within this radiance.

It's some time now that a man moved out
Beyond any approaches. Twice before, but
Distance is most severe for he does exist
Somewhere. Not like the blue, frozen faces
Brought up from the South. Those losses can
Be named and placed.
Perhaps beside a little sister wrapped
In white satin. And what
Is my service. Left to be here. I am not
What they think if they think at all. God,
Keep us from what they call households! We are the
Brittle sisters. A carriage at the door,
And whoever knocks belongs to someone

Who's supposed to be me. But if they think
Of me at all, it isn't me.

In Bed / David Shapiro

We would sail away in this big conversation
Take it in our heads to go into the financial purse together
Find only empty islands so our tears would patter on rivers
 like tins of kerosene
And when I saw you I would gobble up rivers, matchboxes and all.

When you are asleep I will appear and do that some more
And pass the winter like Caesar in Gaul
So I race after you but you put up the storm windows
I lie in bed like the happy book in the library,
 in spite of poverty and pain.

And one day a dry wind blows fractions of a postcard at my feet
The wind that likes to whisk you out of bed
And cover all the space it can reach, swerving
Carefully away, into the black like the balls in the tennis court.

There was no lead in the lead pencil.
There is no bone in whalebone.
In bed your tissue-balloons exploded and Louisa May Alcott
 and the long-hoarded dimes
And you came to give orders to your devoted subjects,
 who shivered into pieces.

This was our game for the old pack of opponents
And it could be played flat on your back.
You twirled the old cards and aimed right for my head
You advised me to draw the lines lightly, so they could be
 easily erased.

Now I see your pictures of a goose presence and rabbit identity.
Each of those creatures must be and is threatened with
 insanity.

Dropping to your knees, you protected my old mirror
 from the lunging air
In it, your own face was white, like candles on the Christmas tree.

When we were tired out we fell among fishermen
You and I swore on sunny seaweed that this penny would be