

Masthead Logo

The Iowa Review

Volume 5
Issue 4 *Winter*

Article 5

1974

Baby Sitting

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Recommended Citation

Jensen, Laura. "Baby Sitting." *The Iowa Review* 5.4 (1974): 7-8. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.1747>

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BABY SITTING

The hen has slipped the paper dolls
into her nest. We have left the lawn
because of notes the parents left.
We have watered the rows of flowers
whiffing greedily of the dirt.
Later,
in their lighted room, I tell
their story of a dune buggy
on the moon. The older girl grins,
for she remembers.

There is the steel moon now,
in wounded vanity
because they have pierced her ear.
She has been their gypsy,
she has been their pirate;
she, in that, has not lost track
of the terrible oceans of waves.

Is it that she sulks?
Bone-brain, pock-face,
what did you expect to see
with your white eye?
She expected cloves and loves,
combs of black, of lavender;
after all,
for years she has let us play
in her shining hair.

They played horse on the piano stool.
It crouches moony on its claws,
on the flattest piece of ground,
a shrouded pony.
I shake the cloth
from the saddle.
Behind I see a delinquent
snarl of hair
in the wilting hydrangea.

The girl is watching the moon.
It is shaped like what moves slowly—
her roof, her net
for the constant sky.