

Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal

Volume 4 | Issue 2

Article 29

January 2005

Ellsworth Avenue

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Recommended Citation

Cavalieri, Grace (2005) "Ellsworth Avenue," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 4: Iss. 2, Article 29.
Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol4/iss2/29>

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ELLSWORTH AVENUE
Grace Cavalieri

The little girls sit on a porch,
cool dresses. It is 3 o'clock.
Mothers are in their kitchens setting
spoons on the table. There are
iced drinks and cookies,
powdered sugar,
talcum powder,
a confection of air.
Not even fathers come home to
break the silence.
The only sound is the boy on the tracks
who has caught a small animal
and tramps through weeds
carrying a cardboard cage,
three holes for air.
The girls ask whose turn it is
to make up a story.
They visit bright countries—
in this way they travel
beyond swinging chairs,
white railings,
a summer porch.
It is as if God mutes the trees to listen.
The only sound is a thrashing,
the biting and scratching as the boy falls,
the rustling and scrambling
of a small animal breaking free.