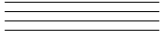


# K I S S I N G F E A R



V A L E R I E W O H L F E L D

Invalid's mouth chilled on ice chips!  
Then sudden flame of ash: lit love letter!  
The little stilled mouth as on a doll, the lip  
false and painted and the porcelain's cheap  
kiss back. Like a cornucopia where one bites the bitter  
marble fruit. To sip the cold ice chip!  
Glassed troubled mercury: some fire grips  
the lit love letter and tears are shed without regret.  
The little stilled mouth on a doll, the lip  
as if some brush mark's mistake in the stripe  
of glaze. The doll neither smiling nor unsmiling, a coquette;  
invalid's mouth chilled on ice chips  
and the kiln-hardened clairvoyant lips  
that transfer fear to fear, and taste of gunmetal.  
The little stilled mouth of a doll, the lip  
inhuman, all mimicry, and in the china slip  
poured to its mold the vignette  
of the invalid, with mouth chilled on ice chips!  
The little stilled mouth as on a doll's hollow lips!