

Deborah Digges

I Begin To Believe We Are Born For Some Things

There was nothing unusual in the dust
of the carnival's last day. The rides
were half-price. Our boys
got over-tired, a little
frantic, running

from one to the other, beautiful
blond boys. We lagged behind them as they
scaled the bleachers, then
doubled back to take a front row seat.
From here

we'd watch police dogs trained
to kill, one moment docile, one
moment dangling from an arm held up
against the dusk
and the carnival's trailers,

its children with their free
passes, told, I guess, to stay
behind the ropes. Two in particular.
A child holding
a child.

Even now, as I begin to tell this, I'm
ashamed, as though I have no right to
claim the moment
when one started to cry,
and the big sister, who

wanted to watch the show, grew angry, and
slapped and slapped the baby. Then my mother
stood up in me. I
had watched her
hanging suet

from the trees, an overcoat
over her nightgown, winter mornings.

I'd seen her lock up our dogs during
the prison riots,
and carry food and coffee

to the barn. In the dark
we'd hear her calling someone's name,
musically, like
one of ours, her voice lifting.
So I picked

up that child, and she came so easily
into my arms and quieted,
which would explain why
on the way home
my sons were shy

on either side of me, and why, as I
remember, the sometime
terror in my husband's
eyes mattered less
in the year that followed.