

Paul Lambrecht
50a Williams St.
Brookline, MA 02446
617-905-2613
lambrecht@post.harvard.edu
www.typeabpositive.com

about 275 words

HARRIET A. BALDWIN
By Paul Lambrecht

Harriet, a girl of fourteen, holding herself together in a wool overcoat, stood on the school steps in defiance of the bitter cold. A cigarette, inhaled in controlled puffs, would have completed the picture, but changed the overall tenor of this conceit: that of a good girl, pure and free, belonging to a horse, perhaps; a heart full of music, flakes melting on her nubile surface like drumbeats, her symphony-ness lacking only the accompaniment of fair-weather friendly birdsongs.

As she waited for her ride home to arrive, two eyes stared at her like nooses. In the shadow of a bare tree, across the playground, a man dedicated himself to crumbling her trembling defenses. Apart from the blushing of her earlobes, just as likely to be an effect of the weather, she had no awareness, whatever, of his presence.

The violence of his thoughts swelled the fury of his pants-torch. "Come here you little cock ring, sit on my jolly old lap," he wheezed amid a gaseous gauntlet of rotting tubercles. The lights and sounds of a car crossed behind his back, interrupting his afternoon entertainment. He stood up stock-still, and looking about as if trying to spot a payphone in a hotel lobby, he walked from under the tree to the road, and back in the direction of his house.

The girl brightened into a smile when her mother arrived at the curb in this selfsame vehicle. She ran to the van and jumped in, giving her mom a kiss on the cheek.

THE END