# Sex Without Love

## by Sharon Olds

How do they do it, the ones who make love  
without love? Beautiful as dancers,  
gliding over each other like ice-skaters  
over the ice, fingers hooked  
inside each other's bodies, faces  
red as steak, wine, wet as the  
children at birth whose mothers are going to  
give them away. How do they come to the  
come to the come to the God come to the  
still waters, and not love  
the one who came there with them, light  
rising slowly as steam off their joined  
skin? These are the true religious,  
the purists, the pros, the ones who will not  
accept a false Messiah, love the  
priest instead of the God. They do not  
mistake the lover for their own pleasure,  
they are like great runners: they know they are alone  
with the road surface, the cold, the wind,  
the fit of their shoes, their over-all cardio-  
vascular health--just factors, like the partner  
in the bed, and not the truth, which is the  
single body alone in the universe  
against its own best time.