

Deborah Keenan

NINE MILE CREEK//WHAT WAS WRITTEN THERE

At the first curve of silt and sand:
Buddha slept here, and well.
And at the second, *Jesus saves,*
Do you? Jesus loves. Do you?
At the edge of the third swimming hole
We read: *Kali makes it live and die.*
Do you?

For fifty years my family's walked
In this small valley, always near
The banks, the creek water rust
And russet, metallic and gleaming.
For fifty years the secret springs
Help the watercress glow green
In all seasons. Love, save,
Sleep, live, and die. We answered
Yes to all, kept walking. The blue
Heron, who is really my dead mother
Returned to us, who is really a
Blue Heron, watches over us as
We read.