

1992

## Gratitude

Lucienne Roe  
*Western Michigan University*

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### Recommended Citation

Roe, Lucienne (1992) "Gratitude," *Calliope (1954-2001)*: Vol. 1992 , Article 5.  
Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/calliope/vol1992/iss1/5>

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## *Gratitude*

No stranger has ever made such an impact on me as you did,  
Mr. Mapplethorpe...

May I call you Robert? Bob?

I came face to face with you through your self-portraits,  
But the glossy black-and-white print holds no warmth,  
no pulse.

There are so many questions I have for you:

What is your inspiration?

Are you happy now?

Why do you shock people?

Did you die alone?

That last question gives me the most pain.

I cry for someone I've never met.

Now that you're gone, do you cry for us?

Trapped in a place where the naked human body is shameful.  
Dirty.

I envy the fact that you rose above all this,  
Don't suppose you were meant for it anyway.  
Thank you all the same, Mr. Mapplethorpe.

*by Lucienne Roe*