

1973

Defeat

Peggy Abbott

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Peggy Abbott

DEFEAT

I stroke your arm,
old —
as a man would trace
the peeling paint on his porch,
pushing his fingertips into every crevice,
and stabbing a flake
under his nail —
a keepsake of inflicted pain.
One last stroke —
He's walking down the stairs.
I touch the dark hairs as they crawl
down your arm —
He caresses the figurehead on the railing.
Your hands cover mine in twisting,
unspoken force —
He turns back, and climbs the stairs.
I am comfortable within your life,
as the man —
within his wooden frame.