

THE HOLY LAND

Once, the whole of this land
was so sacred
that the people walked with naked
sole, every footstep a prayer.
Their bones were made holy by the earth
instead of the other way around.

Once, every kernel of corn
was so sacred
that even the children knew
the prayers to say when it was planted
and the songs to sing
to encourage it to grow.

Once, every child
was so sacred
that the whole village taught
and listened to and loved each one.
It was a holy thing to speak with a child.

Now, we become holy by sitting in rows
wearing our Sunday shoes
and praying to a god that lives
not in our holy land
but some other war-torn Holy Land.

Now, the corn grows in long rows,
more than we need
but we still make it grow—
not with songs but with drugs.
Not because it is sacred,
but because it brings us money.

Now, our children sit in rows
in classrooms
taught not to speak
not to sing
while we sit in rows at our computers
and wait
for
Sunday
to make us sacred
once again.

Mary Holmes



OPHELIA

woodcut

Mary Elizabeth Trahanovsky