

A STATUE BY HENRY MOORE

Deirdre Earle

This huge, eternal woman
Carved in primeval grandeur,
Is immortality substantiated.
Here is the great Earth-Mother,
Palcolithic in essence,
Massive conception, massively conceived,
And ever an enigma to man.
Inanna, Ishtar, Isis, Venus,
Are shades compared to this
Maternal colossus. Their passions
But meagre part of this sublime entity.
Aeons before their lissom forms evolved,
Some Neanderthal maid, half savage,
Coupled with her mate, instinctively.
Then, inarticulate, but strangely stirred
By the first glimmer of human need,
Stayed close to him and he,
Gradually made aware of changed form,
Watched her in awe. Finally, overwhelmed
By the feminine life-giving power,
He took stone and hesitatingly carved
Distended torso and spreading hips.
Moved, but oblivious of his own creativity,
This ancient man enshrined his crude madonna,
And began the solemn worship of fertility,
An unfathomable mystery, to be feared and revered
For its power apparent in all of Nature.
Later came more graceful shapes
In flesh, and men, comprehending
This seductiveness, moulded goddesses of love,

To slake their fears of nascent life.
But always birth impinged upon consciousness,
And man, caught in the demoralizing myth
Started by himself, returned in art, constantly,
To maternity, as though capturing the crooked arm,
The swelling breast and curving shoulder
Could serve to assuage his longing.
Still she appears, Mother of all,
Brooding, dominant and sorrowful.
Oh, sculptor can you not see her need?
When you formed that careworn back
You half revealed the secret she would
Wish you to expose. She cannot be,
Exist or continue alone; her every pulse
Depends on you. She knows what is necessity,
Without her complement there is no life.
Yes. Carve, create and give her totality;
Give her a giant of a man.