

She dreamed of ironspiked girdles,
 A hand turned to stone in its purse,
 Children trapped screaming,
 Legs ruddy, toys melting, tears of steam
 On an escalator to hell,

Of poisoned roses, floorwalkers flayed,
 Salesmen ground into pulp—

Till she lost her head to a timid clerk
 Who would not meet her eye.

IT DID NOT TAKE GALILEO

Alice M. Swaim

It did not take Galileo to know
 That only worlds created in man's mind
 Could possibly be square or angular,
 For nature is all arcs and curves meandering
 The longest distance to the shortest point;
 Even the stark geometry of weathered stone
 Is curved to parallel the curve of earth,
 And the amazing lens of human eye,
 Convex, concave, but never limited
 By flat and final finiteness that bounds
 The universe, like disappearing sun.
 Only the grave is angular,
 Lest some curious stranger passing
 Feel the insistence of imprisoned life
 And resurrect awareness
 From the mimicked curve of dust;
 Only the grave, flat, onedimensional
 Reduces wonder to an epitaph.