

American Academy of Poets Winner -- Randall Hinson

# Dance Hall Floor

She

stoops down in the river for Friday  
Night, next to Black Pines,  
Red Clay, Fool's Gold.  
Her bare feet  
washed by silt and melted  
snow; she lets the feeling  
drift down stream for  
the fingers in her hair,  
the poisoned breath on her neck/  
Friday Night.

She's never cursed Grandfather's truck,  
never shame for Mother's hair,  
never shy from a  
tenth grade education/  
her baby boy; she'll  
wear a faded, sun-print  
dress ~ all except  
for Friday Night/

she returns  
from Friday Night  
on Saturday Morning  
Mother always says,

"I love you."

when the lights go down  
on the parquet floor.  
She can roll a joint

-yeah

and she can Dance...  
with Mary's cousin from Atlanta?

-Hmmm

Maybe Sweet Dan who sweeps  
the barber's floor.  
Bottles of beer for  
Fifty cents.

Brown. Cold. Perspiring.  
She dances with her eyes  
closed through every song  
the band plays; she knows  
them all by heart.

The boys respect the way her low cut,  
blue gown flips,  
her curls and when

and makes her breakfast.