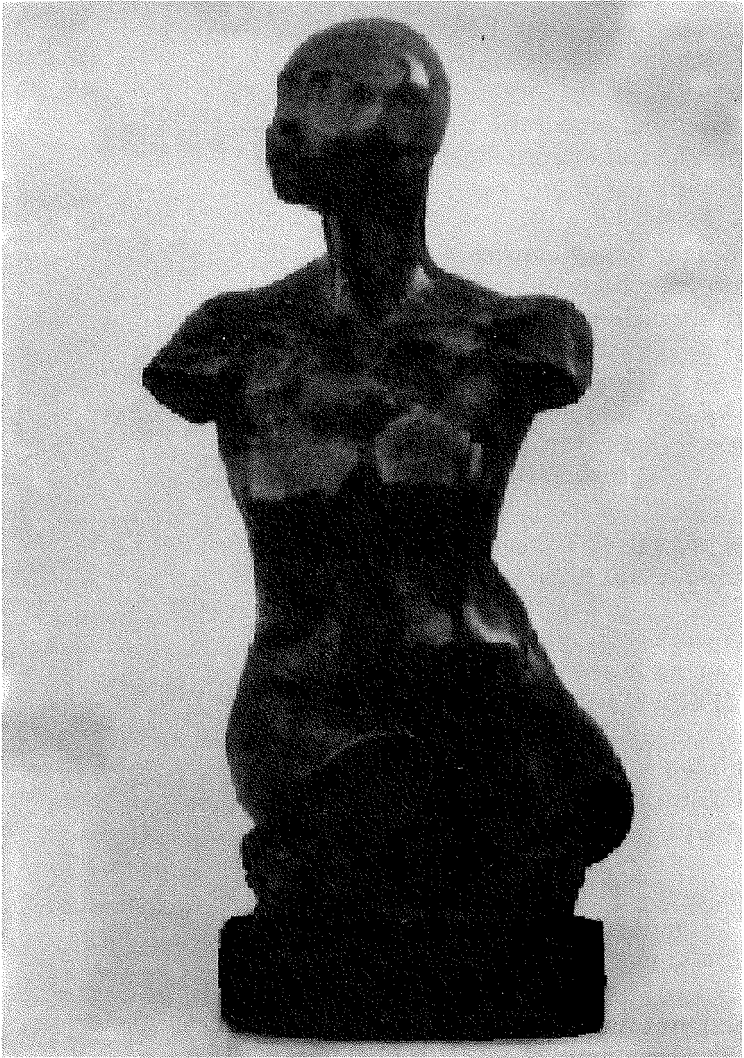


Bloodline

Of the half dozen times
my mother saw her father
one was just after my birth,
when he drove out from New Mexico
to my parents' apartment
in West L.A., held me briefly
and commented on my fairness:
my glassy eyes; translucence
of my bluepink skin. He was
dark himself, though his mother,
Cuca, was fair, almost blond,
with the broad facial planes of the Nordic—
the same early fairness my mother had
as a very young child,
her hair a surprise
of yellow corn *masa*,
the same early fairness
I alone among four siblings
possessed; that vein of golden ore
ran seldom but deep through the female family, but time
would mine it out. Unlike Cuca
Mom darkened as she aged,
hair and eyes
contusing purpleblack,
the color of dried blue corn,
and I wonder now just how awkward
it was, that moment
in the tiny apartment when
her unfamiliar father
held her unfamiliar newborn, her head
now gleaming dark as his, both blueblack as scabs
with mine, soft and pink,
bob-and-weaving
between them. Mom tells me she
hemorrhaged that night,
and I can see the red drops

run down her legs: bloodflower seeds
awakened by oxygen
as the blue wound reopened.



Charlotte
Hydrostone Sculpture
By Laura Ann Chiodini