

# Spring 1964

by [Diane G. Scholl](#) in the [March 24, 2009](#) issue

In June the World's Fair with bright red strawberries  
and cream over seared Belgian waffles. It grows hot.  
Trapped in the crowd, a tangled skein of nerves,  
lost and hungry for quiet, for tenderness, I ride  
with my aunt on a long conveyor belt to see the Pietà.  
So gentle the grieving, tranquil mother with her downcast  
eyes, the stone folds still around her, the cold flesh  
of her perfect son. She does not attempt to cry.  
My aunt, primed by *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, leans  
to recognize "Buonarroti" on the chiseled band, tasting  
the contours of each round unaccustomed syllable.  
She whispers the name. She will not last two years.  
Silent, thrilled and careful as dancers, when we step off  
on solid ground we are joined by our secret, sworn  
never to tell what we have no words to say. This is how  
it will be in the winter we take our leave: bitter flakes  
in a sharp ribbon of wind beyond tears or anger,  
the long frozen loop home from the hospital waiting  
for me, as we both know. Suddenly shy and tongue-tied  
as a girl, she will reach out from her bed to touch me,  
recalling too the marble brow, faintly wrinkled,  
the white hand, open, as if it were asking a question.