

## Lilly Library

Susan McMichael

We have arrived again.  
One year in every ten  
We manage it --

Opening the folders,  
The letters, is sort of a miracle,  
Her blonde summer,

The beach, the heat,  
The tight air invisible  
In the smiles.

Read beneath the letters  
Scholar, biographer,  
She only fascinates:

The hair, the cards, the baby teeth  
The paper life  
Will hold us for a week.

Soon, soon the papers  
She wrote on, will give up  
A name, an idea...

She is always smiling  
and always thirty.  
The cat was luckier.

We wonder about each moment  
Find a fragment  
Find a section and focus

What a million choices.  
The peanut crunching crowd  
Is silenced by her handwriting

Scrawls on the pages,  
Did she think  
So many of us would notice?

This is her hair  
Her teeth.  
It may be in boxes, tied up.

Nevertheless, it is her words  
The same identical words  
On the page.

We write and write:  
Take notes, get lost in  
Her pages and underlinings;

What did she say?  
They have to call and call -  
What did you find?

Finding  
The answer is an art.  
The folders are in here

They have answers.  
They provide questions  
I guess you could say they are holy.

It's easy enough to start questions  
It's easy enough to stay put.  
It's the pulling back

To the long blue days,  
When a whistled shout  
A new fact

Amazing!  
That knocks them out  
There is no charge

For the eyeing of her hair  
To look at the lock  
It's really there.

There is no charge for the words,  
The stamps, her teeth,  
The girl guide uniform,

Or her sun dress from 1953.  
So student, so teacher  
So, biographers

She is our study.  
She is our valuable.  
The blue woman

Who twists under our pen  
In pictures she smiles.  
We wonder how to encapsulate her.

Letter, card-

We read and sigh.  
Dick, Ted, There is so much there:

Come and dance  
I have a good self  
There is a panther....

The room holds her things  
Beware  
Beware

Out of the room  
She is always there  
Which one to choose?