

# Sandra Hunter

for the babies  
if I have to hear about  
one more baby being raped  
or tortured  
or mutilated  
I'll have to kill someone  
it will have to be some stranger  
since I don't know  
any baby rapers  
at least, I don't think I do  
and anyway  
picking a random someone  
would be appropriate  
symbolic  
I would use a knife or a gun  
or a rope or an ice-pick  
standard stuff  
I don't know much about the  
killing business  
but I'm sure I'd pick it up quickly  
and after he was dead  
the random guy  
the tree trimmer  
the ice-cream man  
the plumber  
I'd carve something on his chest  
'this one's for the babies'  
yeah  
but maybe that's not symbolic enough  
maybe I should pick someone famous  
not like Jay Leno or Ryan Seacrest  
but someone people don't like much  
or maybe Ryan Seacrest  
then I'd use the knife or the gun  
or the rope or the ice-pick  
and then I'd be arrested  
and people would be angry, confused  
'why Jay?' 'why Ryan?'  
and I'd tell them—  
it's for the babies  
someone's got to do something  
and they'd say—  
she's crazy  
and they'd tie me up  
and put me on a plane  
and when we reached cruising altitude  
they'd push me out  
and I'm flying down  
to the wide warm ocean  
that will not part gently  
but will receive me  
like a fat slab of concrete  
and I'll say—  
but this one's for the babies  
the sweet sad babies left on shelves  
left in boxes  
left at home in the evenings  
left to unlock the front doors  
and sit at the table doing their homework  
left to find something,  
maybe old pasta or fish fingers  
in the refrigerator  
left to remember to lock the front door  
left to wait for the footsteps of  
the man who doesn't need to break in  
to reach them

# for the babies



When Sandra Hunter isn't teaching at Moorpark College in Ventura, she toils up hills in Malibu where it is still possible to fly, by bike, above the clouds, she dances with her daughter on the beach and isn't arrested, and she doubles the garlic in most non-dessert recipes. Her short stories have appeared in *New York Stories*, *Zyzyva*, *Talking River Review*, *Glimmer Train*, and others. She is currently working on a sectional novel titled "Waiting for Heaven."

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