

MISSISSIPPI ANGELS

I saw a woman
In a blue-flowered smock riding
A bicycle. She held up
The end of her smock with one hand,
As if descending a staircase,
Or dancing.

In the deep South,

I would see old black women
On Sunday mornings, splendid in
White dresses, carrying black umbrellas,
Wending their way to church, boys in bow ties,
Girls in taffeta skirts,
Flocked about them.

These are the shepherds,

And these my people,
Bicycling the roads, walking the green earth—
Dancing, all of us,
Dancing as the world whirls,
Dancing

Like angels on the head of a pin.