

## Alone

I was seven  
when they took me  
from my mother  
because  
she drank too much  
and stayed out all night  
leaving me and my sisters  
alone.

They  
put me in a foster home  
and told me  
I would be safer there  
than at home.

The father was nice,  
he played Uno with me.  
The mother slapped me  
because  
I didn't appreciate  
how she took me in.

Their son,  
a senior in high school,  
lay me  
on the floor between beds,  
playing doctor, he said  
until he tore me.  
I cried and cried.

He said if I told,  
I would be sent to a place  
where big rats run over  
little girls like me.

I never told.  
How could I?  
Who would believe me?  
His father?  
His mother?  
There was no one.

Thanksgiving,  
Christmas,  
Easter went by -  
before  
they gave me back  
to my mother.  
By then I was dirty  
and disgusting.  
Not even my mother  
could love me.

Jean Meyer