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Hate Crime

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Hate Crime

David Schelhaas

Already past her I turned when I heard her shout, "I'm sicken tired of waiting for you"
and saw
her grab him by the hair, an adult pulling her child's hair, he not even five, frail, blond,
and, I suppose,
used to her tantrums; still he screamed as I turned away, but I turned again when she shrieked
"Shut up,
Shut up, Shut up, Shut up," four times, each one louder than the last, into his little face, little
eyes tear-blurred,
ears large enough to contain, at least for a time, her hatred—but how long? How long before they
go dead,
before the heart goes dead, before the face and eyes and ears and heart all die and all that lives is
the hatred
they've contained? I turn again muttering, "Shame on you, lady, shame, shame, shame."
wondering if
love lives in her heart with the hate coming out of her mouth, thinking it probably does, thinking
that's no excuse
she's as guilty of hate crimes as any idiot who ever spray-painted "nigger" or "hebe" on
somebody's house
or yard, thinking you can't arrest people for some of the worst crimes, knowing nothing I might
say could
change anything and only One whose movement into hateful hearts remains mystery could fill
hers with love.