

K. HENDERSON

A Mixed Girl's Virginia

was the mother remarried, a new house in the country. Was the home sown by Quakers, picked by stone, one by the other to fallow the field. Was it there I learned *foyer*, a new word to welcome the sting of a place, summon the soon-to-be echo of my twice-turned cheek. Was my nose first opened in the dusted wall. Was my nostrils wadded with snuffed news, strangled plastics, what was mice. Was their husks an antique proof of being had. Was it night that found her tangled in the bath, was it the last girl's hair snaked up from the drain. Was a tug on the leash to a southern muck, knee-deep in the yard before the veranda. Was unearthed a focus for digging by hand, a salt shaker the shape of a blue-black woman, cap cracked in half, half-filled with clay. Was it the day she seeded bones for me to pluck as warning. Was the wedding flowers picked on the grounds of a plantation. Was I spared their spoiling. Was inherited. Was which came first, the color sulfur or canary.