

High School Reunion

Jen Rouse

Now twenty years have passed, and I know
I should've kissed you in the rain, turned
your head to meet mine, tucked the wisp
of your fine hair behind your delicate ear.
Always those gold hoop earrings, glistening
and forbidden, the sunroof open to Prince's
"The Arms of Orion." Slicing the night
and the shivering fields of corn with
our cries of "I'd cross the stars for you."

I remember the cadmium color caked
underneath your nails, your fingers underneath
my chin. *Listen. Listen.* What words
should we have used then—two girls
in love. So many things stopped
us—the ice that threw us on
the road to New Orleans, the men
you paraded through our dorm room only
to abandon. How I learned to console
them and never myself. And when you
called from the middle of nowhere
anywhere to say you just didn't
love him, I always knew why.

You had a shearling-lined coat.
You took me to your backroom studio
and put it down. "In the heart of a
sleepless moon," he cried through
his cloud guitar, as you pointed
out a bowtie of stars through
the skylight. I have never forgotten
how to find that constellation,
or a whisper of you against
a starry starry night.



Prince
"The Arms of Orion"
Batman Soundtrack
10/1989
Warner Bros.