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Sharon Olds: "Indictment of Senior Officers"

Sharon Olds · Thursday, April 19th, 2012

Sharon Olds was thirty-seven when she published her first book of poems, *Satan Says* (1980). Since then, she has been the recipient of many awards including the 2013 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry, the 1984 National Book Critics Circle Award, and the first San Francisco Poetry Center Award in 1980 She currently teaches creative writing at New York University.
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Indictment of Senior Officers

In the hallway above the pit of the stairwell
my sister and I would meet at night,
eyes and hair dark, bodies
like twins in the dark. We did not talk of
the two who had brought us there, like generals,
for their own reasons. We sat, buddies
in wartime, her living body the proof of
my living body, our backs to the vast
shell hole of the stairs, down which
we would have to go, knowing nothing
but what we had learned there,
so that now
when I think of my sister, the holes of the needles
in her hips and in the creases of her elbows,
and the marks from the latest husband's beatings,
and the scars of the operations, I feel the
rage of a soldier standing over the body of
someone sent to the front lines
without training
or a weapon.

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