

**MARILYN NELSON**

**Your Own**

**Kelly Green Cotton-Polyester Dress with Green and Brown Plaid Bodice  
(Smoky Hill AFB, Kansas, 1953)**

Our new house, Officers' Quarters 42,  
connects to other quarters, and mowed yards  
connecting to wheat fields and wilderness  
waiting to be explored by kids and dogs.  
Sometimes we don't come in until we're called  
by someone's mom. They say Mom, not Mama.  
Hazel, Charlotte, Jeannie, Tommy and Charles:  
as soon as we hear the School's Over bell  
we flock together like migrating birds,  
catching grasshoppers, gathering bouquets,  
or just plain running into breathlessness.  
I don't know why Mama looked sad tonight  
while I was washing up, or why she said  
Be careful: Don't like them more than your own.