

C Minus Minus

It was only summer 1967.
The corn was tall,
and I was still green.
It was only an elective,

a summer course to fill a void.
It was the right time of day
so I chose Home Economics 231,
Marriage and Family.

Ward and June had not been my parents,
and I was the wrong gender to be Beaver.
Maybe this would create a new picture.
Miss Cornish was my only female professor – a virgin in every sense,

and it was only a term paper, any topic you chose,
in a class extolling only the virtues of a traditional marriage
and a traditional family.
It was a Betty Crocker world.

Betty Freidan changed my life
with *The Feminine Mystique*, proof that
women had been sold a bill of goods.
I knew, I'd seen it first-hand.

I'd had enough of duty,
enough of "Because I said so,"
enough of "Do what I say, not what I do,"
enough of being a "good girl."

They were only roles, constrictions, only rules keeping me there.
I needed change to fulfill my yearning for freedom
so I read and I wrote and went to class at 11.
I felt better for that.

Pure and white as the day I'd turned it in,
the paper had only one mark --
in red -- small, small print, bottom right.
It was only a C minus minus.

I can still feel the anger surge.