

THE SCULPTOR

I watched a sculptor work the other day.
His hands were wet, his fingers caked in clay.
As though by master plan he labored lovingly;
In careful detail he worked knowingly.
Not speaking, once he paused as though in thought.
A firm and gentle hand he upward brought
And filled a place with clay that had been bare.
I looked again. A face stared back at me from there.
More and more took form beneath the master's touch.
And lo! The head was mine, the face was such
As I had never seen myself before – an image
Strong, courageous, wise and soft –
A me I'd never held aloft.
How can he work, I thought, and make such beauty shine
From these plain contributions that are mine?
With tender eyes the sculptor answers me:
“I have wrought only what the Christ in me could see.”

—*Elena Whiteside, 1979*