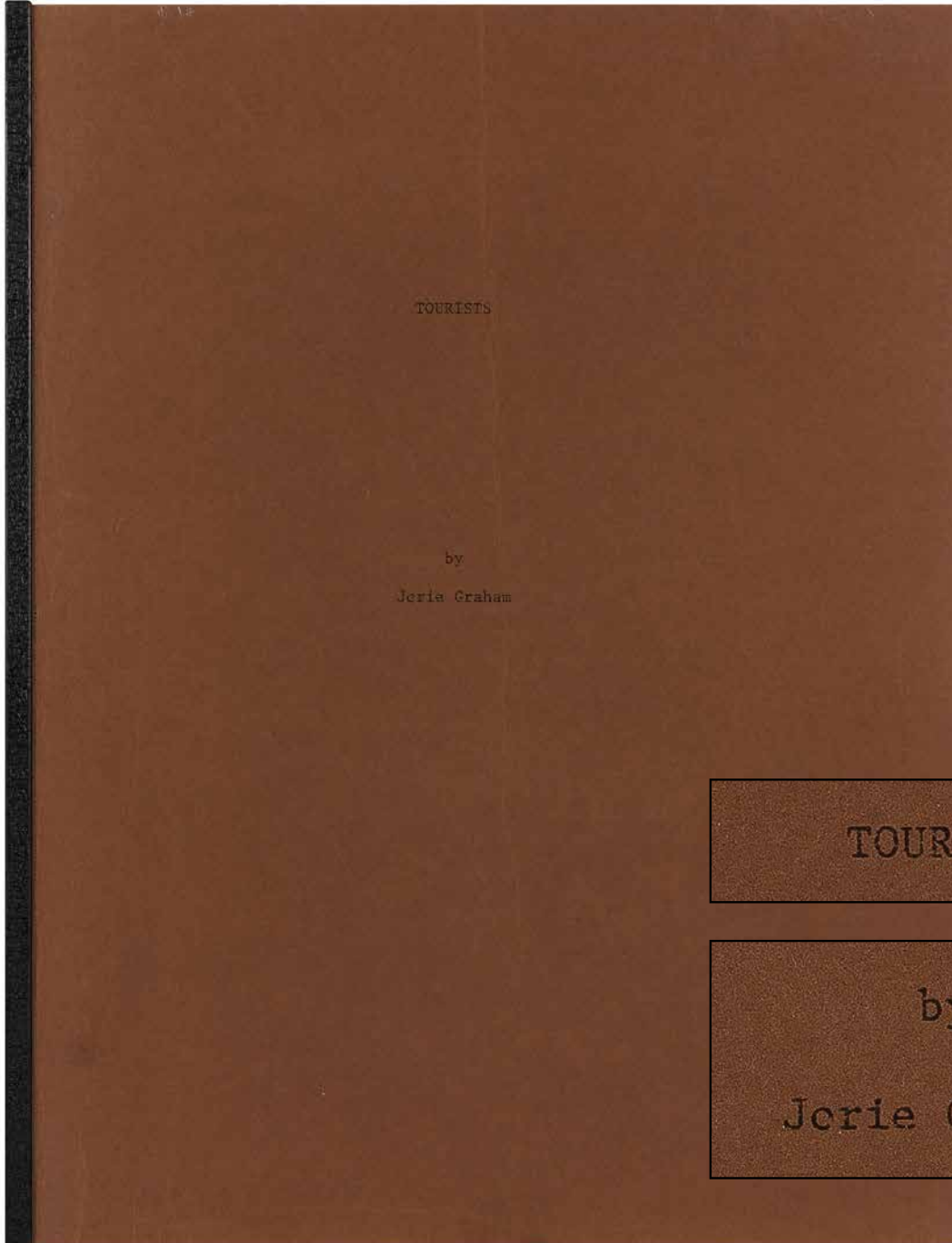


## Jorie Graham

### *[Master's Thesis]: Tourists*

[Iowa City, Iowa]: University of Iowa May 1978

\$6500



Brown paper wrappers with Velo binder. Quarto. 63pp. A couple light creases to the wraps, near fine. Inscribed by Graham: "To Edith & Del, A Rough Draft, love Jorie." A copy of Graham's University of Iowa Master Thesis inscribed to Edith and Delbert Wylder, professors at Murray State University. Delbert was a graduate of Iowa and worked with several of

TOURISTS

by

Jorie Graham

its notable students, including Graham who was poetry editor of their literary magazine, *Crazyhorse*.

Graham's thesis, completed in May 1978 with poet Donald Justice as her advisor, includes 54 poems in all with at least 17 of them later appearing in Graham's first book in 1980, *Hybrid of Plants and of Ghosts*. There are a few scattered hand corrections in red pen, along with two poems that have printed dedications that do not appear to be in later versions. There is also a third poem, "In High Water" (published in *Hybrid*), with a handwritten dedication by Graham for Edith. A nicely association copy of a rare publication. *OCLC* locates one copy at Iowa. [\[BTC#432006\]](#)

For Edith + Deb  
A Rough Draft  
Love  
Jorie

TOURISTS

by

Jorie Graham

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Fine Arts in English (Creative Writing)  
in the Graduate College of  
The University of Iowa

May, 1978

Thesis supervisor: Professor Donald Justice

## IN HIGH WATERS

Quartered, cleaned, this beautiful black wire looped and knotted through them, you hung the squash on the back porch. All September they puckered, cracked. Black-backed, they hunched. Then they were dry.

They clicked a little, early September, when the wind made its way past them. Hollow sounds, almost pleasing--cupped hands clapping a bit for themselves when we weren't looking. November I drew them.

They had stopped changing now. I drew them landlocked. Canyons. They scorned the rivers that had abandoned them. Four phases of some moon I drew them. Four rowboats run aground. Four, leashed to their piling, nudging each other

from time to time. Four sails learning to quarter wind, gather way--what cunning, what incredible patience! We brought them indoors to a large nail in the kitchen. I drew them again, four ships in a rice-paper storm,

four rocks narrowly avoided by the sailor, who, thanks to them finds his way home. Four sailors memories of the same girl. Now you would cook them. Soaked in water, salt, they would plump up.

How nice to have things out of season. Summer squash caught in our winter, there is snow outside like you would not believe. Whole trees are buried beneath ~~the~~ waves, becalmed. The world

is everywhere able to flow into itself without damage or confusion. Something we don't know is complete without us and continues. On the other side of the ocean, four dark sails joining to become black

granite cliffs, buckle over the water's end protecting this finest of erosions. Rosemary, Thyme. You quarter onions. I cannot tell you now--you are so pleased--but I don't believe you should try to bring them back.

(For Editz.)

## BACK TOWARDS HOME

At the edge of the forest, we seem to be expecting something to return to us, slow

and gaining definition, although hearing what comes our way (the ocean through the pine

for instance) we keep on listening past its arrival. The sagebrush awaits the soft

songbirds; the ninebark, fourwing and black mimosa for the deer to browse; the fat buffalo-

berry for quail to flee into them. And at the heart of wood the grain

deploys the currents polynesians used to find their islands--it is interrupted that we find

ourselves. And yet, there is no hurry. The slower the growth, the finer the grain will be,

there being, perhaps, a speed of growth at which all seams become invisible:

the blackjack pine eventually becomes the yellow, although it takes three hundred years;

the almost rootless tree-of-heaven, that will not rise above the ground, spreads

in circles to include it all. ~~Through trees, sounds too far off to hear tell secrets.~~

~~A secret's secret is whose it will be.~~

~~Whose will we be, at the edge of setting off?~~

## STRATEGIES FOR A LOVE POEM

Look at the hydrangea  
wintering as the earth's

lacetted corset.  
It comes undone like a dress

with so many buttons.  
And then the lavender

pillows it makes for itself  
when it finally awakens

with its pastel apology:  
I have done this before.

See then the myriad ways  
it finds to go to sleep on them,

promising sleepily, I  
haven't really done this before.

The air that surrounds it  
is a lost boundary--

sea-blue, baby, sky or  
robin's egg--nothing clear

except that all is vaguely  
heart-shaped and losing

definition. The tendrils  
don't hold firm, disclaiming

knots. We're not sure what  
we want. And there is

only one good time  
to bring shears to bear,

~~only one ending--~~  
~~these tips of violet fingers~~

~~eager as the tips of matches~~  
~~to be freed.~~