

ANDREW GRACE

[No, I didn't touch them. Need]

No, I didn't touch them. Need
is murder on the veins—I feel weak
like grease is coursing through me.
I saw the woman roll over in her bed,

clumsily, not awake, and it was so private,
so unconscious, that I flinched
and slipped back to the barn. Now
I am sick in the rotted mortar of this horse stall.

But to have been up the narrow steps,
to have seen her hair, matted and moonlit. . . .
The longer I lie here, as a new storm routs
the rasping acres of dry leaves,

as sluggish thunder opens its North throat
and spotty rain erects its ghosts,
the more I feel I am getting,
like a fever, my second wind.