

DIANE TUCKER
GARGOYLES

Hunched, crunched, crouched, curled
in every limb at great heights, stone claws
sunk into buttresses, eaves, spread wide
over drainpipes or nestled into the earth
under the chives in our small garden.

Not able to get by on their looks, they shock,
they snarl for attention, concrete lips pulled back
sneering, stone bums bare and climbing,
spread marble batwings all a-creak.

What they know they won't tell,
which presses their foreheads into split-rail
creases, swells their noses, shoots little horns
out of their skulls, sharpens their teeth.
They look and know but will never ever tell.

Their stony silence freezes them, all that
keeping their own counsel, thickening,
thwarting and twisting their once-lithe bodies,
wisdom ossifying behind their granite ribs.