

MARILYN NELSON

Your Own

**Kelly Green Cotton-Polyester Dress with Green and Brown Plaid Bodice
(Smoky Hill AFB, Kansas, 1953)**

Our new house, Officers' Quarters 42,
connects to other quarters, and mowed yards
connecting to wheat fields and wilderness
waiting to be explored by kids and dogs.
Sometimes we don't come in until we're called
by someone's mom. They say Mom, not Mama.
Hazel, Charlotte, Jeannie, Tommy and Charles:
as soon as we hear the School's Over bell
we flock together like migrating birds,
catching grasshoppers, gathering bouquets,
or just plain running into breathlessness.
I don't know why Mama looked sad tonight
while I was washing up, or why she said
Be careful: Don't like them more than your own.