

## TELL ME EVERYTHING

*And Other Stories.*

By Joyce Hinnefeld.

Middlebury/Bread Loaf/University Press of New England, \$17.95.

Joyce Hinnefeld's strong debut collection portrays in spare, haunting prose the lives of women of different ages and backgrounds, all of whom feel trapped in various female roles. "What Alma Knows" is a particularly successful story about a self-described "spinster" aunt, ignored by her relatives; unhappily, her attempt at revenge during a Christmas party winds up endangering the one family member she cares about. "Echo Guilt" subtly describes a wife who increasingly loses all ambition as her husband's professional success grows. The yuppie narrator of "The Slow and Painful Demise of the American Family" cannot quite accept her destiny — to marry her boyfriend and become a housewife in the suburbs — but fears any other possibilities. In "Speaking in Tongues," a teen-age girl deeply troubled by her sexuality fantasizes about Jesus and Mary Magdalene. Unfortunately, other stories — including the title story and the four brief poetic sketches that divide the book — are simply too elusive. Interestingly enough, the best entry, "Stories About Miranda," has the only male narrator in the collection. He is Rumer Rutledge, a 21-year-old flasher who is urged by a hospital psychiatrist to talk about his mother, Miranda, a fat, 45-year-old doll collector who never brushes her hair or changes out of her baby-doll pajamas. "The truth is," Rumer reluctantly admits, "Miranda herself is a pretty interesting story." And he turns out to be right.

JENNY MCPHEE