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REICH, HEATHER TOSTESON. *Uneasy Entry*. (1977)
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The poems in this book center around the theme of human isolation and the desire for communication. I have used the interactions between men and women as symbols of this universal division.

The poems in the first section, *Connections*, are primarily narrative. They explore ways in which two individuals become aware of the distances between them, their emotional responses to this distance, and various ineffective ways in which they try to bridge the gulf they have just seen open at their feet.

The second section, *Domestic Lessons*, deals with a more personal experience of human isolation.

The third section, *Caves*, is an imaginative attempt to reach the sources of androgyny within the individual, an attempt to come to terms emotionally and intellectually with the knowledge of the co-existence of male and female sensibility in each of us. The aim of the poems, which could be considered rites of passage, is to revitalize and complete in an individually significant way the fragmented myths of childhood.

The last section, *Sharing Visions*, is concerned with moments of true communion between individuals, and the implications of these accidents of grace which allow us to see life for a second through eyes other than our own.

UNEASY ENTRY

by

Heather Tosteson Reich

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
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Approved by

Frank Chappell
Thesis Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of
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10/1/54

Mr. [Name] [Address] [City] [State] [Zip]

Dear Mr. [Name]:

I am writing to you regarding [Topic]

[Detailed text paragraph]

[Detailed text paragraph]

CONNECTIONS

[Text paragraph]

[Text paragraph]

[Text paragraph]

[Text paragraph]

[Text paragraph]

Flocking

1

Men flock to the railing to feed pigeons.
Pigeons flock on the pavement to be fed.

Frightened men flock.
Frightened women flock.

Frightened sheep suffocate flocking
in the backs of pick-up trucks.

Would they have been slaughtered anyway
on market day? Is it just feather

or fur that determine where instinct
to motion will bring them?

11

Blackbirds, of gloss feather, of coarse
caw, together become ancient, an arrowhead

shot in purposive flight over
a cypress swamp, over tannin-dark water,

over bleeding maples and a somber veil
of Spanish moss. The flock I watch

settles down over a ripe cornfield
in the evening, billows

up like a dusty blanket
under the first shotgun blast.

Prudence Plays Skittles

1

Rarely, my mother could be coerced
into speaking of her childhood.
I enjoyed the stories.
In the basement playroom of every child
the persistent damp is anathema
only to adults. It defies
panelling, disinfectants, and de-
humidifiers. Water wells
through the brick foundations.
The pools on the brown linoleum
gleam like wax in the dim light.

ii

The old man trapped in the storm
cistern taps on the grimy window
trying to attract his wife.
He times his Prudence
with a scarred gold watch.
Adoration films his eyes
like cataracts. He smiles
as he watches her bend,
rotund, with that luminous
absorption of the deaf,
to bowl oranges down a lane
made of shattered mirrors
toward a maze made of bones
from past Sunday roasts.

His white hair breaks like unrealed wheat
under the weight of the snow.

Connections

Women grind mushrooms
under immaculate heels.
In the fallow, unregenerate grass
and the conical fruit of winter rains,
they find augurs of a toxic March.

Black rimmed. Black gilled.
Rooted, their exteriors
are iridescent as dry sand--
as if all they would reveal
is the apparent desiccation.

But when he kneels he sees they seem
to have been eaten into
by some insect-- or their own
proximity--

 until all that remains
in places is a tattered membrane, web
deserted by the spider.

So when carelessly culled, abandoned
to dry on white tile sills,
in the morning he finds they've left rings
of soot. As if they had been ignited
by the coals of sleep, flared,
lit up that dark
of which one is never aware.

Sam's Proposal

1

There I was all set to pop the question.
 The minute I walked in I wanted out.
 To slam the door, set vases jitterbugging
 across her tables, and leave asters,
 butterfly weed, all over her parquet floor.

If I could. Can't. My hands
 did a little dance on the bookcase,
 sofa back. On her bare shoulder
 my fingers got to moving

like a mantis' hands. Gluttons
 for attention. She settled
 back against me like a cat.
 Sue kept right on speaking.

Saundra laughing with her, batting,
 by god, their eyes. Mascara
 knotted at the ends of their lashes.
 I could do a better job.

If only they knew. They'd look
 at me different if they did.
 They'd look at me. "Hey, sisters,"
 I said. "Shall I come back later?"

"No. Why?" Their mouths clogged
 faucets spluttering laughter.
 "Anyway, as I was saying,"
 Sue went on, Bill started giving

Annie the eye. I thought to
 use his hand for an ashtray.
 Thought better of it. Pinched
 his cheek and said good-bye.

'Why? Why?' His black eyes
 spinning like marbles
 trying to keep us both in view.
 'Honey,' I said, moving closer,

napkin in my hand, 'Wipe yourself.
There's beer on your moustache.
Why, you're dirty as a child.'
What does she see in that bitch?

Saundra, smiling, shakes her head.
Sue, leaning back in the armchair,
laughs harder and harder. Blue
shadow glitters from lid to brow.

"But how do you feel about it?"
Saundra asks settling back
against me like I was her sofa
cushion. "Not as bad
as I could. Not as good."

Sue bites to stop the quiver.
Lipstick rims her teeth.
"Bye, I've got to run."
"Come back soon, you hear."

"Love to Mama if you see her."
Door closed, Saundra turns
to me: "How you doing, Baby?
Long time no see." She cuddles

up, blind, and shoves her lips at me.
"That new shadow, honey,
what do you call it-- mauve?
Looks just like someone beat you."

I leave.

11

Slammed my own door so hard
it got the rocking chair to moving
squeaking at me like a nest of mice.
I pounded up the stairs.

I couldn't find the wedding ring.
Strewed clothes everywhere.
Beating on the walls, I rambled
in my mind, "She doesn't care.
Dumb. Thick. Broad."

Let it wait a bit I thought
 stumbling off to take a shower.
 Treated myself to a new blade.
 Plugged the basin.

The face in my hands had eyelids
 bald as monks' skulls, a beard
 so long it was nuzzling
 at the ear lobes.
 Stripped it off in bars.

Then my own scarred face
 was leering at me
 full again and dimpled
 like the moon.

iii

Sauntered through the drugstore
 scanning counters with an aimless grin.
 Ring on my finger.

Blue was what I wanted.
 Shadow. Liner. Peach
 blush on, black mascara.

Treated myself to perfume.
 Lady behind the counter squinting
 at me spraying testers in the air.
 "I'll take Potpourri," I said.
 Pepper. Roses.

"My wife just had a baby.
 Sent me off for paint."
 She smiles. Wary
 I head off for diaper pins.

Blue ducks. "Boy?"
 "Yes, ma'm. Shawn.
 He's our first one."

iv

Stripped to my shorts, I started
 all over again. Red slacks.
 Florid Indian gauze accentuating
 my chest. Something lacking.
 Necklace? Scarf?

Let it wait a bit.
Lined them up beside the basin.
Shadow a blue wash over my eyelids.
Higher and higher. Eddied
in my eyebrows.
Where the hell's the tweezers?

Eyes shifting around like fish
under that blue tide.
Liner marking out their boundaries.
Casing them in like clams.

Mascara. Heavy. Knots
at the ends, remember.
Blusher. Lobster
just going under.
I open my mouth.
Lipstick. Fully cooked.

Bite my lip to stop the quiver.
Blood scabbing on the tips
of my teeth. I think I'll need
a scarf. Yellow
as the daisies on my shirt.

A beer or two before I go.
Dark, but it won't matter.
Neighbors aren't curious.
If you've got a porsche
you've gotta be a jock.

v

Just for the hell of it
I take the back route.
Trees solid with kudzu
loom at the headlights.
Gray walls ready to topple.

What am I going to say?
She'll stand there. Just staring.
I'll net her face.
Unable to escape, she'll close
her eyes and I'll just rub
my fists so gentle on their lids.
"Honey, I'm still Sam.

Under the streetlight her face
will be gray, soft as paraffin,
when I try to pry her lids up
and see as she sees. See
my reflection float untroubled
on her flat green eyes.

I'll whisper, "Talk
to me the way you do
to her. Soft. No walls."
And her face will keep
shuddering, falling,
falling. Again.
Like it's been since I knew her.

My hands, her hair, both over
her face like a net.
She keeps evading me.
Her lips moving like minnows
in the dark under my fingers.

Under a murmur solid as a boulder
the words scuttle, shy
and hungry as crayfish.
"Who are you? What is this?"

vi

I can't go through with it.
I dream something's gone wrong
with the make-up. Fear
slithers over me smooth as nylon.
Nothing to hold on to.

Saundra's face floats
on my open hands. Water
films over her open eyes.
It beads on her lashes.
Sticks there like mascara.

Her face slithers in my hands.
Murmurs falling from me
like stars. "I want to be
at one with you." Leaning
closer, clearly, "Marry me?"

On a flat green sea my face
rises round as the harvest
moon. I fall shattering
the water. Like jellyfish
carried on the underside
of waves, my faces
approach me with closed
eyes, pursed lips.

Something's gone wrong
with the make-up. Their lids
are mauve. Bruised.
Their lips bleed.
Saundra's face floats
on my open hands.
In the moonlight she is smiling.
Ice has covered her eyes.
"I will. I will."

Imaginot Game

One hundred blue eyes blinked.
A shell clamped shut. She was quick.
The sick shock came when she felt
the oyster crab, dun, soft-skinned,
scratching on the inside of her skull.

What an image he left her, eager
to be leaving. Brusquely asking,
"Do you want to carry my head off,
dripping, to bed?"

Latches

1

I don't know what's wrong with me.
Two weeks and it still plays
before me like a movie.
"Can't it wait until morning,"
I asked him. It was 3 A.M.
"I'm desperate," he said,
and I said, "Come then.
We might as well talk now."
Talk might help, might stop
that slurred speech he had
so carefully prepared for me.

It's all in slow motion.
The screen door opens, slams.
I nod. He laughs. I lose track
of sound. I see black wasps
swarm in and out of his mouth.
I raise my hands to save my eyes.
The floor trembles under us.
Beside me I can feel his body
shaking. I'm calm. I think
it's over now and he is coming
to make up for all this. Then
I feel the gun pressed against
my ear like a tongue, and freeze.

I open my eyes. It frightens
me to see how it has all ended
in this: Stars trapped in the screen
like beads of water after summer rain.
A dog barking in the distance.
The quiet click.

2

Today I thought I saw his face
pressed against the screen.
I thought he was laughing. Again
he couldn't wait to make up.
I went to the door and saw
only a splay of red leaves
half-eaten away by insects.

I saw, underneath them, the viscous
tracks left on my steps last night
by snails or slugs. I watched
the gel redden, become honey,
and disappear as the sun cleared
the treetops. I thought, if only
I were sure I would never see
those leaves again. On the screen
I watched my fingers turning
into larvae and I knew
I was responsible.
I latched the door.

Land Lock

Reaching out through the dark, suddenly I wasn't sure that I would find your ear still there, soft and white as a curd. Delusions of loss, of love, they were yours-- but for a moment I thought them mine, coming as they did in the middle of the night, without words. Was it because I had only mentioned my love for the gentle curve, and didn't make explicit its necessary connection to you, that you thought I could see, or was asking to see, it severed from the harsh plane of your cheek. An immense tension, increasing cold; your images condensed on me as if I were a silver mirror. Wanting to see them as allusions to love, wanting to breathe in an atmosphere slowly solidifying, surrounded by a liquid element denser than mercury, I found myself telling you a story:

Having at dawn called down into the streets for a boy to come and deliver the present, he listened for the rapid irregular tread, and opening the door before he heard a foot touch the last warped step, gripping the child by the elbow tugged him into the loft. The package, wrapped in brown paper, lay on a small deal table near the fireplace. He stuttered out her address. A white smile broke through the night's dark crust. He said, "I want it left without notice on her doorstep." The greased paper flexed, rustled and shimmered like brown taffeta in the boy's hand as he descended the dim staircase.

And then the man, tugging off his cap as he shut the door, turned to his two easels. Frightened by the mute trickery of that oblique light, he reached out to straighten the sheer silver mirror that didn't reflect him, found it a blank canvas. He picked up his palette knife-- but turning to look out the dusty window before he began to work he saw sparrows, driven off the sill by his movement, rise into the overcast sky, align, then descend in a clear amber curve toward the frozen lake, or the high white reaches of its snow-banked shore. But when did he feel the suffusion a calm brighter than sunlight on the surface of still water, the mad assurance that he'd given her exactly what she wanted?

What did he think? Later in the morning, still half asleep, she would climb down her stairs carelessly knotting the belt of her indian red wrapper. She would open her door, and stepping out on the doorstep, stoop and gently hiss away the alley cats. She would pick up the package without thinking, and cradling it comfortably in the crook of her arm, as if it were a staple, croissant or cheese, carry it with her into the kitchen. That, lying opened on the white table, the sight of it would make her gasp in a severe spasm of excitement, and, as she stepped back, her robe would open slightly, her breasts heave, the veins would weave, dark, tortuous as strands of seaweed through her milk white thighs...

I don't think it ever occurred to her to remember the previous evening in the cafe or that listless stranger with whom she'd casually coquetted as she passed the table where he sat, alone, staring down at a broken carafe. Or what it was she'd said to try and make him raise his head so that she could see his eyes, and drive away the mild unease she'd felt when pricked by their reflections, scattered, like amber spindles, among the splinters of the shattered glass. Why should she? It was quickly dispelled-- but because as she spoke his hands rose instead to hold his head, and his gaze fell to the floor.

So, my surmise is that, instead, the gift fell from the package as she carelessly unwrapped it with one hand as she was closing the door. She stared, puzzled, at the object which lay, like a small white foetal curve, on the dim doorsill, at the cadmium red rag which surrounded it like fresh afterbirth-- and refused to inspect it closely. Although, perhaps, as she started up the stairs still holding her breath and pulling her robe tighter around her, she turned and saw the wrapping paper which when cast into the corner had first flexed and buckled like the ankle of a snared deer, battening down now, on the dark floorboards, like a lid.

Later, as she became convinced of the meaning of what she had at first only dimly perceived, as she felt her love quietly contracting into something dark and solid, she moved across the landing, entered the silent bedroom, and with hair as carelessly dishevelled as the brown sheets, bending down she woke another, her lover, by gripping his ear and whispering softly began with, "Vincent, dear, who was she? Whatever did she mean? What should I think? How could I think anything but what I do think, seeing what I've seen?" The blood pulsed visibly in the whites of her eyes, the blue irises widened as she stood, having moved away to the window, and stared directly into the face of the sun.

Through the closed window she heard the yelping of a pack of dogs and could imagine a cat running, already lamed, before them through a narrow alley. "Who was she? What could you have possibly have said to her to make her think you wanted-- that. You loved her belly flat? You only loved what made it surge? Does it matter. Tell me this, why did she send it here? Was it a gift for you or for you and me? If it weren't for her, for this, I think you would never have told me. I think you should have told me. Much earlier. This death has entered my life without any warning. I think and I think-- but I just don't know how, or where, I will ever be able to bury it."

Darling, don't you think it evident, whatever the intentions were, they mangled them. When? I think, for the painter, it happened the same night he met her, later, as he remained, seated as he had been, alone at the littered table. When (although his eyes continued to caress the perimeter of the dark hemisphere her brown skirt had drawn on the dusty floor where she'd stopped stooping to whisper) his white hands returning unconsciously to the table, idly having pooled the translucent debris, gripped it-- and by that sudden, careless circumscription forced it to swell and to crest with pigment. Create quite another shape. Take on quite a different colour. Yes, I agree it was an action she repeated (as, perhaps, I do now)-- but in her own life, in her own fashion. Maybe on the landing, when floundering sightless in an arctic sea she gripped the edge of an iceberg and, tracing its rigid contours, saw high granite cliffs take form in her mind's eye. When deciding she'd reached the shore of a continent impervious to the dark, salt currents-- she chose to adhere to it, like a limpet.

Cheesecake

In the back booth she leans
earnestly toward the table
and opening her protuberant blue
eyes a little wider, whispers,
"Of course, babies are the worst ones.
They can die on you."

He leans back against the wooden
partition smiling. He admires
the light on her white forehead,
her high cheekbones, and thinks
that she will age well.

She picks up her fork and furrows
the smooth surface of her cheesecake.
"Trapped in their cribs, they can't
come to you. You could forget
to feed them if they didn't cry."

A long blonde strand curls
around her breast. He nods
and leans closer. Her nipples
harden under her sheer dress.
"At night if it burrows

under its blankets a cat
might mistake it for a bolster,
or mole, and knead it
or eat its head."
He breaks in: "A minute."

Under the table his hand
scurries over the dark floor
searching for the fork. He loses
his balance as he rises. The cool
tines scratch against her shin,
her knee. "Excuse me."

"Their skulls aren't closed. I think
it's their brains that you see
throbbing just under the skin."

Picnic

Bodies are bleached, the radio's
blare effused by the dusk.
Even human movement
begins to seem eccentric.
A woman squats beside me,
and, like an old friend,
shares her chips.

She murmurs, "The strong demand
strength of you. They suck it out."
I see her rise from a blaring surf.
She is covered with leeches
aligned like ceremonial scars.
I blurt, "You don't like him."
"But I do. I do."

As he kneels and leans
forward (she has proffered
the hoarded chips, the paper cup
of sallow beer) I see the hair
on his chest has turned white.
It is almost as translucent
as the underlip of a fish
gagged on a sodden saltine.

He sips.
The tree trunk caresses the nape
of my neck, comforting, coarse
as a fact: This has gone on for years.

Alexis

At night, as I water my philodendrons
I can hear an old man muttering
on the stairs. He scatters moist
fragments of his life on the carpet
like a half-masticated soda cracker.

I can't come closer to him.
When I approach, the air I enter
is impenetrable, green-- as if, at last,
a small cat writhing among poisonous leaves,
I have lost all field of vision.

Grandfather, I am terrified I will die
like you, face set in a rictus of fear.
My grandchildren will judge me
as I judged you: "He never understood
anything about life or love
but the anguish of death and separation.

Sunday Morning Walk

"The sound of flowing water brings me peace."
A momentary salve on conscience, fright and fury.
You laugh, my last thought having been
to knock you off the bridge to stick
head down, quivering, in the branch bed.

"And somebody thinks they're a poet!"
I can't hear the generosity in your laughter.
"Tap water? Toilet bowls?" Beneath the surface
crawdads scuttle, unseen, expected. Algae
have dried up like clay on the boulders.

Drought dregs, the slow water still moves;
crouched, eyes closed, I can feel it filtering
between and around my obsessions. The sound,
cool and translucent, brings with it the thought
of damp green moss, wild iris, and rhododendron.

Still laughing you say while we're walking away,
"The weight of our child on your shoulders
would that bring you peace--"

Domestic Lessons

Turning to look behind me at my best friend
as he rode, smiling, in the red wagon,
I brought myself up against the wall
and tore my fingernails away.

You were clear headed when you bound
my hand in a dishtowel, striped, homely,
a little ragged. A doctor, you took me to
another. You wouldn't treat your own.

Not until we were older, were friends,
and you saw me running, unwittingly,
at that wall again. You called out my name
trying to make me turn and look ahead.

Then, diffident, you did your best to teach
me how to mend. But at the least pressure,
I bleed again. The only way to keep my own
house neat is to change the sheets each day.

The Garden

To help herd up the cows for milking,
 my son and his father head off to pasture.
 I don't want to be left alone in the garden
 but I can't say why. Instead I draw silently
 away from the abrasive green leaves, the five
 hairy fingers of a single squash leaf
 that grips my waist. I am sick of this
 garden we share with a farmer, of always acting
 as if, like Ruth, here I might come to feel at home.
 Cautiously, I thread my way to the corn rows.

A single ear worm nestles, gnawing, at each
 tassel's base. Over the years I've become so
 inured to this that now I can casually evict
 them with my fingertips. Greedily I reach
 for a fat ear and see it open at my touch.
 There is a rotting in its husk. It bulges
 with white tumorous kernels, each one
 firm as a mushroom. A blackness
 falls between the seeds. The ear swarms
 with insects. I don't bother to pull it off.

I turn it so the break can't easily be seen.
 Perhaps I have expected this. At least I find
 myself murmuring a gentle greeting: "Then there's a pair
 of us. Don't tell. They'd banish us you know."
 I know it's an old, uncultivated thought pushing
 its way out again. I tug at it like a weed
 that won't give easily. Won't give at all.
 Graciously I concede. Its roots are made for red clay.
 I go to collect tomatoes from the sprawling vines.
 One way or the other, I have to make dinner.

All day I've been hearing the furtive scuffle
 of voyeurs. It takes a strong stomach to weed
 a garden. There is little room for dreaming.
 Queasy, I squelch the sound, pick off the sun-
 scorched fruit. I observe as I do so the plants'
 wild growth, their aerial roots that like paralysed
 green centipedes' feet can still suspend
 the stalks an inch above the ground, still keep
 them stiff and dry. It is then I see
 the half-eaten green tomato and startle

the rabbit into bounding. Its teeth have petalled the stiff fruit until it resembles one of the semi-succulent roses that grow on the cliffs in Carmel. I have less than a second to think this. The farmer's cat, leaping out from its hiding place in the corn row, looses one low moan of pleasure. I don't wait to see if I could hear (what I've never heard, due either to ignorance, or a deplorable lack of curiosity) the only sound a rabbit makes, its high sharp screams of terror.

Home Preserves

Time doesn't pass. One summer,
this one, having completed the last
of my chores each morning, I close
my kitchen cabinets on whole shelves
I've stocked with sealed mason jars.

Only tomatoes preserved in salted water
retain their own shape, colour.
I close the doors on that flesh
just beginning to loosen, that brine

only slightly tinted red, and see
as my arm descends, a woman
standing alone on the verge of a town
that has gone up in flames behind her.

Like Cassandra she stands with one arm upraised--
and like Cassandra her mind is opened up behind.
Inside her open mouth the flames are dancing
like many tongues. I will not listen.

Can't We Just Be Happy

"Can't we just be happy and watch T.V.?" you ask. You empty the last of a fifth of scotch in your glass. "Why are you doing this to me?" What can I say? I'm sorry? I'm frightened? I want to be a good, loyal wife, but death keeps making advances and my resolve is weakening? When he comes up behind me in the shower and kisses the nape of my neck, I shudder with pleasure? The hand which covers mine and helps me guide the razor is more tender and comforting than yours? I'm obsessed with desire for a single bed? "Can't we just be happy?" you ask.

I put you to bed with your bottle. The baby is safely sleeping with his bear. I wash the dinner dishes. My hand doubles as whetstone. I sharpen paring knives and meat cleavers. Lately, all my dreams are blatant wishes. Only last night I admitted I was sick. You showed remarkable compassion. You chose not to love me. I woke laughing. I resent this embryo growing inside me. It is a cancer about which I'm not free to speak. As you said, you never expected to hear the mother of your son say something like that.

"Why are you doing this to me? Can't we just watch T.V. and be happy?" Death puts his tongue in my ear. The knife slips. What can I say? I'm sorry. It was an accident.

It is by now a commonplace of biological thought to observe that man, in his character as animal, is born at least a year too soon, completing in the sphere of society a development that other species accomplish within the womb.

The Masks of God: Joseph Campbell

CAVES

Caves: CASTLE

Ascent

1

I am restrained; it is a given.

In a castle built of sandstone,
in a tower whose walls, marbled
with ochre stains, were once
permeated by incessant rains,

I've settled myself comfortably
into the cradle of a man's arms.
Lulled by his steady pulse
I am feigning sleep.

As we climb I see through
lowered lashes stone steps
rutted by children's feet, ivy
webbing on interior walls.

Turn back to seek the leaf-
dimmed light. The last shoots
twine in strangle holds.
Dry leaves shudder as we pass.

Sand grates beneath his feet.
I am careful to rest my head,
dead weight, on his shoulder
and to smile as if I were dreaming.

I've begun to suspect
a prince is hidden
somewhere inside this castle.
A heavy oak door swings open.

I see a motionless form
underneath the sheets.
Borne to him, laid to rest
beside him, I will greet him
with unfeigned pleasure.

Even if he is,
as he will be, moldering,
colder than clay, greener
than a tom cat's eyes.

11

I realise as I watch the heavy oak
door swing closed, slowly blot
out the shape of his retreating back

who made this ascent effortless
for me and am happy to recognise
him in yet another guise.

Has he always, in all his forms,
been only the emissary of this prince,
steward of this chamber?

Was it only to lead me here that he
chased me for so many years.
Breathless with the fatigue

of always keeping just
out of reach, I would turn
to see those empty

withered arms beseeching me.
The hands at the ends of them
were skeletal. Enough.

A warm touch led me to this
secret chamber. The prince lies
immediately at hand.

111

A cool green light sifts
through leaves shuttering
the single window.
Settles on me.

Now I am green and cold
as these sheets which lap
my arms, thighs, accepting
me as complacently as the sea.

I am green and cold
as the form which lies
underneath them.

Will the familiar contours
of a cool, intractable clasp
lead me now again
into unfamiliar regions.

Lulled by his silence,
I settle myself comfortably
into the cradle of a man's arms.
I am restrained; it is a given.

Descent

"There are no men or women in these regions"

1

In the dungeon, over the cold
gray walls there is a gelatinous
blue sheen of algae. Water
seeps through mortar, beads
on the pitted stone floors.

I stand at an open doorway.
The long corridor behind me
is sealed by fire, a forge
where smiths are weaving
an intricate iron tapestry.

My eyes focus on the dim
stairwell, on the gold
slipperd feet of a murmuring
crowd slowly descending in unison.
In the shadows their clothes
glow like stained glass.

I can distinguish, sown
among deep green robes,
every shade in summer fruit--
in honeydew, ripe apricots, green
peaches. I can't see their faces.

Their hands remain hidden
in deep velvet folds.
I wait to see if they bring
daggers or keys.

11

Something has happened.
They stop, turn in on their circle.
Murmuring among themselves, they rise
without looking behind them.

On the stairs their footsteps are soft
and cold as winter rain falling
on decayed leaves. I stumble forward.
I cannot speak. Something has happened
to make them move away from me.

Was it my silent retreat, in horror,
from a woman's voice howling in anger,
"It belongs to me. Give it to me.
Love...Love...Love."

Or was it my silent retreat, in anger,
from a man's gentle, avaricious voice
echoing, "You owe me...Love
...Love...Love."

Something has happened and throughout
these underground chambers I can hear
barred doors falling into place.
It is a sound which repeats itself
forever like an image trapped
between two mirrors.

111

The blue chamber I'm locked in
grows brighter. The heat
from the furnaces rises.

I rub my cheek against silver
bars soothed by their cool touch.
Momentary respite, it doesn't
meet my purpose, my search.

In the distance their robes are somber,
luminous as shadows
falling at dawn from cathedral
windows onto cold stone floors.

The noise of doors falling
again and again and again
pounds on me, repeated
blows, single hammer.

My hands are being pounded open.

the...

The...

The...

Caves: CATACOMB

The...

The Crossing

The walls have fallen. Leaves
carpet the black tile floor.
This morning a woman is reading
outloud: "I saw eternity
the other night like a great ring
of pure and endless light."
Her voice pulses, shifting the leaves.
Inside a ring of red leaves
a black space is yawning.
With a soft moan it appeals
to her: "Come. Inside me
you will be mended, turned
like a shirtcuff. I will give
you a new facing." Yes

But she can't keep silent.
Fear makes her ask: Will I
in that dark space beyond time
be out of place, a parasite
who breeds like a green
tick on a foetus' head?
The leaves are wet. They caress
her face and hands, trace
her veins with silt. She takes note
of this as she moves through them.
It might be new. You see,
she can't remember. Her first birth
she kept her eyes closed
and screamed. She can't see.
Blood clamors against her ears.
Silently she attaches herself.

Betrayal: The Sacraments

Permanence

In the mirror I watch my sister
 come up behind me.
 She is raging.
 "All those years without a father."
 My mouth is filled with meat.
 "I'm starving
 and you took him away from me."

Then, without words, I turn and take
 her. Incestuous marriage
 among skate-boards and tricycles.
 There's no way to keep him
 from coming between us
 but this. Embrace.

Kiss. My shadow
 is a well at her feet.
 Noon. I dip
 down and drink
 her blood like water.
 On the tongue it is sweet
 and salt as hunger.

Abstinence

The edge of my palm on his neck
 as if I were readying a sacrifice.
 In my throat, stone clot, chalcedony
 tears. He lay there bleating
 like a lamb: "Not again."

(If he were regretting only one
 woman. If she had a name,
 let's say, Anne, then
 would I be free of his
 love, of this sin:
 I can't even beg your pardon.
 I am one of them.)

And again I feel it take
 shape in my throat. A clot
 of clear chalcedony.
 It makes me gag on water.
 Each drop that touches my tongue
 becomes a live scarab.

At night when I close my ears
 I can hear their carapaces
 rasping against my teeth.

The Place of Worship

Her eyes have grown accustomed
to the absence of light. The walls
of the room are black, ridged,
wet. Under her hands they are firm,
ungiving as flesh.

Men, flat on their backs
create a spoked circle
in the middle of the room.
Their heads touch, hairs
bleed, raven and blonde, brown
and gray rim to an empty center.
They play a variation of the game
flying angels. Infants balance
on their footsoles. They toss them,
whispering, and the wheel
begins to spin.

The air stirs. Rustle of moth
wings, human hands, silk
clothing. Women on the edges
of the room are dressed in red
skirts, veils. They hug cold
foetuses to their naked breasts.
Their faces are covered with ashes.
They are emaciated. They are pregnant
with hunger. They are all crying
for bread. Even the crosses hold
swollen bellies.

The arms of the children beat
the air in arcs translucent
and blue as the wings of damsel
and dragonflies. The women weave
their arms together and in one
fluid contraction close
over the hoot and holler
of tired children, frightened men.
The foetuses fall like pollen
into the dead center of the circle.

The room is red and black.
The women move forward, back,
and with their movement the noise
comes to life like the heart
and like the heart dies again.
The air is filled with scarlet
shadows, the rustle of insect
wings, flames, sighs, the slow
drift of rose petals in the fall.

Cri de Chat: The Songs Jemima Sang

The air cracks like parched clay.

-What you doing down there, Jemima?

-Playing with a dead man's toes.

Jemima, out from under the decayed porch, spits on her dusty hands, twirls the tips of her braids. She points, grinning.

-Six on each. I've never seen anything so tiny and white.

I take that back. I flipped a dead tree branch once and saw some grubs. Same size. Same feel.

-What on earth, Jemima! What if...it was a murder, wasn't it?

-Only if your mind works that way, Lady. I'm inclined to take his words for it. He said he was a block of wood and his kin were arrows. At first I thought it was a lie, but then I changed my mind. In the end he made good. I mean, there he lies, stiff as plywood. It's so peculiar, though, I think I'll go ahead and investigate.

She pulls a detective's badge out of her back pocket. Just in case, she picks up a paper tube to sheath Exhibit A. Opening out her sprigged muslin parasol, adjusting her monocle, Jemima saunters off in pursuit of the truth.

Jemima is my sister. She is fair and I am dark. She is thirteen and I am twenty three. I try to baby her. She mothers me. As she turns the corner, frayed jeans trailing in the dust, I sigh: Oh, Jemima, here I go again. I've left it up to you. Please see me through this time.

Years, or is it days later, Jemima leans out her attic window. Her green satin slip glitters, fly skin. She adjusts the brown magnolia on her hat.

-What have you learned, Jemima?

She crawls out on the window ledge, shimmies down the drain. -Sh...Crickets have found a home in his ears. I heard two years ago he went off on a journey. Came back an old man. Turned in on himself like a turtle. Spineless. Inside his house again, his skin got blue as ice. It sounds awful, but it had its use. His refrigerator was always on the blink, and he had a passion for cold drinks.

-Jemima, will you never learn. It's not nice to gossip.

-Don't you worry your head about it. When I went out to chat with his neighbors, get the scoop, I put the baby doll and the cat in the carriage. They acted as my cover. When there was a row I told them it was the kid and tucked the blanket in over its head. Sniffed and said, "cri de chat." They were glad to change the subject. You see, it was a fair exchange. I gave them something to talk about too.

-Jemima, forget about clues. What are we going to do about him? There is a stench here honeysuckle and viburnum can't take care of.

-The rains will do him in. And, until then, why, we'll just stay away, my little Lady. By the bye, I've decided. I'm changing my name to Jim.

Jemima's skin is crusted with lime. Her head is scabbed, bald.
Eyes on the grave rubbing above my head, she answers my call as if
it came from within.

-Where have you been, Jim?

-Lady, when I, like Sinbad, think of my sojourn in the cave of
the dead, I almost lose my reason.

The strings of dusty stones clasped around her hips, ankles,
wrists, shudder with her and mark the time in which she sings.

I sit down. Settle back in my chair. I'm comfortable.
I'm ready to listen.

-To see clearly, I had to become him.....

In the first country I lost my company
of men. I alone had no appetite
for that king's food, no desire
to be nurtured like a swine.

I saw their hips swell
their breasts descend like dugs
to feed the little girls
who brought them meat and wine.

The night before the sacrifice
I lost my first skin
in the sewers of their city, reached
the sea, translucent. A free man.

At dawn, as the sacrifice
began and my men screamed
like mating cats, I cast off.
South winds filled my sail.

In the northern land from which I've just
come, I took a wife. Her eyes the colour
of ripe olives and her skin as white
as the stallion I taught her to ride.

At night she clung to me, a second skin.
She suited me well;
fifteen and eager to please.
For a year I wore the ermine robes of a king.

I did not know the customs of the country
and did not protest when the midwife,
hissing in an alien tongue, swaddled
my child in black veils, carried it away
nuzzling, pacified, at her dry breast.

I saw my wife's white cheek, white lips.
Her eyes the colour of ripe olives.
Her belly bruised and stained.
She was fifteen and did not know
her body no longer pleased me.

I led the funeral cortege but the women prepared her for burial. I did not know the customs of the country. They clothed her in silk and bound her hair with gold chains, her neck with precious stones.

I led the funeral cortege, but I did not know the customs of the country. The women followed me wailing. They carried baskets filled with olives, bread, and wine. I thought they wanted to nourish her soul on its long journey.

I did not know the customs of the country. When we came to the caves where they buried their dead, I knelt at her head. I wept as I weighted her eyes with jade stones. The women laid down their baskets, and backed away, singing. They began to gather stones.

In the cave of the dead I lost my second skin.
I forget when I stopped trying to distinguish
between day and night, or when I began to writhe,
still hobbled, from my wife's side. On wicker,
strand by strand, I broke the ropes. Strand
by strand my reason loosened. Gave way.
I was a free man. Like a dog I licked
the blood from my wrists, lapped the wine,
tore into the bread like flesh.

Each day I lived there, I knelt with less
loathing beside my wife. I forgave her
for being as eager to please death
as to please me, for the way she'd become one
so easily with the ground around her.
Each day increased my hoard of understanding.
I went to each corpse in turn and knelt forcing
my hands to touch their faces lovingly
before I stripped their jewels away.

I hid when the townspeople came to bury
the living, the dead. Like a lullaby
I whispered their song's refrain
in the old woman's ear before I killed her.

So, to the old woman who shared her bread
with me, to the others who came after,
I gave my thanks and ate it like a sacrament.
But one day I woke longing for the sea.

I began to loosen the stones at the mouth
of the cave. It was easier than thought,
or the grief I felt taking leave
of my wife for the last time.

Clothed in jewels and singing, I ran,
stumbling, down a gentle green slope
to bathe myself in the sea. Love,
love: like a white stallion, you
will bear her on her long journey.

Jemima is still. I can't stop rocking, slamming my head against the slats of the chair. She hears and stares down in compassion. She is as tall as my son will be.

Her hands flutter around my face like large gray moths. With broken fingers she combs the hair from my eyes. She whispers in my ear.

-Lady, enough of this. It was only a song. A lullaby.

Dear Mary

I will give you the book
and the materials for the
and the book
I will give you the book
and the materials for the
and the book

I will give you the book
and the materials for the
and the book
I will give you the book
and the materials for the
and the book

I will give you the book
and the materials for the
and the book
I will give you the book
and the materials for the
and the book

SHARING VISIONS

I will give you the book
and the materials for the
and the book
I will give you the book
and the materials for the
and the book

I will give you the book
and the materials for the
and the book
I will give you the book
and the materials for the
and the book

Uneasy Entry

A moil even darker than the night
 air, but substantial, the deer
 herd on the beach.

Surround me.

Although their fur abrades,
 their odour, rich as humus,
 suffocates, I am dancing.

Hooves have dug gulches
 in wet sand. A labyrinth
 my feet retrace. Dancing blindly
 into the dark ocean, I seine it
 with my hands, my hair. Come.
 I am crying. Come even then.
 The sea is fire.

In the air the smell of sulphur.
 Sea urchins' spines, spines
 of blowfish spark and I
 flame like dry tinder. Lantern,
 I turn to the beach again.
 I move through air luxurious
 as water. I say to them,
 Come. Their eyes are embers.

My hands are tender,
 heavy as lava,
 washing over the antlers
 loosing lichens and moss.
 Startled, alert, the herd
 draws back and takes
 shape in the dark.
 Luminous cradle of roots.

At the center I am dancing.
 My hands, covered with lichen,
 rise, branch, root. I am
 what I see. Movement
 slightly darker than the night
 air but substantial
 as grace, green
 as a prayer: come

Sugar

Grown taller than you or I, the cane
leaf bent under the small bird's breast
rings the man's neck like the arm
of a scythe. Clinging to the keen
green edge, the bright male cardinal cries
out against the overseer's ear:
Cheap. Cheap labour-- ardour.

As the one black head turns
to survey its green acreage,
and the black hair flames, white filaments
at the rim of an eclipsed sun,
from under the canebrake, from under
the men's bare backs barely perceptible
against the dark wet ground, the wind
catches up the women's moulted
red bandannas and scatters them
silently through the field like seeds.

Sound Slough

A bat flies along the shore
mimicking the susurration of waves.
Hundreds of caves pock the cliffs.
He is trying to find (before
the tide rises, flotsam
fills the caves, and the ocean
spumes under mounting winds)

one cave which can transmute his cry
and send it back to him
as a sound he chanced to hear far inland
once, on a mountain lake
in the evening when the rain
gabbled on the quieting water
like a distant flock of geese.

To Put An End To This

No more to have over me
the lurch of obscene insects
the flight of magnificent moths

I will hollow a turtle shell
and fill it with earth,
plant it with Spanish moss.

I will kill the face of love
and shape an idol.

Peering through gray hair
its eyes will be dun stones
its mouth a ripe peony.

It will always be deaf
and breathless.

I will hold it to my breast,
my hands bouquets of thistle,
and rock, crooning.

Lunar Cycle

i

I distill
 a yellow liquid
 illicit as moonshine.
 It curdles in my pants.

"What is it? What is it?"
 The doctor kneads my stomach.
 "Fungi.
 Or yeast."

I am sprouting lichen
 in the dark. Green
 mold? Blue?
 Is it iridescent?

Why me? This man
 has no answer:
 "Some women. . .
 better soil. . ."

Like me.
 Are we acid,
 alkaline,
 just rotten?

ii

A Man rocks on his stool
 and squawls, "Hey bartender,
 I can see through your skirt."

Unaccountably ashamed,
 I have no answer, and retreat
 from all sources of light.

Nice guy, he approaches me
 later, "Honey, I had no right.
 I thought better of you

for blushing. Nice
girl. Let me tell you, sweetie,
no need to be ashamed of what I seen."

I shift uncomfortably
cramped. Damn the adamant
tug of the moon, the rise
and fall of the tides.

iii

My sister writes of her first
miscarriage:

"The depth
of my disappointment
surprises me.

Now I look with envy
at pregnant women
and beautiful children.

I feel unaccountably dizzy
and exhausted. Yesterday
I started bleeding again.

Not real blood
but some dark
awful looking liquid.

What is it?"

Gallery

Now, in the second home in which I've lived
alone, I'm able at last to bring all
your photographs into the bedroom:
Maple seeds. Sundew. Fountain in a Garden.
They always seemed peculiarly mine
as if you knew and made visible
objects in my interior landscape.
It wasn't true. But I knew that
when I left you. I chose them
for both their illusion and their reality.
I never doubted they belonged here
in my private gallery, beside prints
of "The Song of the Lark" and, my favorite,
the fifteenth century Dutch still life
replete with tulips, morning glories, peas,
wheat, snails, moths, blackberries, and,
on the green vase, the reflection of an open window.

Maple Seeds

It is an absolutely tranquil picture.
You caught each warp in the maple
seeds, the liquid fall of the leaves,
the tinge of red in the veins.
You always kept your lens immaculate.
The eye you turned to nature
was immaculate. You saw purely
in terms of colour and symmetry.
I had unlimited respect for your detachment.
At the zoo you could catch animals
in the most expressive poses.
No one would have known they weren't
in their native habitats, that you'd
stood there for hours, your camera
focused exactly between two bars, waiting
for a panda to enter your field of vision.
You photographed our son in the same way.
I'm sure, having chosen never to see
him again, you'll remember him always
as you saw him then. On walks, the two
of us silent as usual, you'd turn and catch
the child in such a way his hair
became the sun and his skin seemed
translucent, almost ethereal, blue.

Sundew

Of course I couldn't leave the sundew,
that bloodshot lidless eye. Although for years
it has hung over my head to protect
me while I slept, lately I've moved it,
placed it opposite my bed. The backdrop
is a briny black. You focused
so closely on that carnivorous plant
it became an abstract spiral of green
mouths and red spines. The viscous
liquid secreted to snare insects
is dew, fresh dew. A dandelion
gone to seed is a cameo woman.
She extends like a figurehead
over the prow of those mouths, the gush
of blood, the grass, the one drowned
fly. If I stare down into the center
of the plant where the mouths are all opening,
the grass blades at the lower left corner
keep drawing my eye down and back up
to the woman, a marble silhouette.
The plant meant nothing to you.
To me it was a picture of hatred.
An eye that would never shut.
It protected me when you invaded my dreams:
I would hear a scuffling and run
to my son's room and see you
scrabbling at the screen.
You were coming to take him.
You looked up at me. The edges
of your mouth were slack and wet
with liquor. You had a special smile for those
occasions. A complex blend of shame and the most
intense will. I would shake my head.
I would stare until your face dissolved
into an abstract composition of red lips, sallow
green skin: your face in the morning
when I saw you casually dusting
at the insecticide you'd spilled in a child's
library book. "Go ahead and take it back.
If they don't know it won't hurt them."
But by then the dream had ended. I was awake
and safe. The locks were all in place.
The only sounds were my son's soft breathing,
the gray rain beating on the dusty panes.

The Fountain

My favorite, the fountain in the garden,
you never framed. I liked that.
It meant I could prop it on my desk.
I could touch it. It is a scene
from a place I knew before I knew you.
You photographed it at an odd angle,
but I know how it should be,
how it appeared to me when I was sixteen.
It is a small, stagnant pond where irises
grow in the spring, yellow and purple
lotuses bloom in the summer. In the center
of the green leaves, the algae covered water,
there is an iron birdbath, or fountain.
The basin brims with deep red water.
It is an extremely quiet place. Ten feet
away there is a solid screen of magnolias.
The photograph only catches the lower branches,
and the long shadows. But the park
is as familiar to me as my own heart
so I know behind the trees there stands
a statue of a soldier sowing grain. I forget,
but I think it's a memorial to the end of a war.

Epithalamium for Zoe and Freddy Losada

Whether after your marriage this summer,
or the end of mine last fall,
my sister, my new brother,
as I sit thinking of you after you've left--

a forest in full leaf rises
before me. A green depth
without reverberation. It weighs
on me like a sated passion.

I glimpse as I push through
branches circling like arms
and must quickly distinguish splays
of maple, cedar, sycamore
and spruce-- then cease
confronted by such stillness.

From the tip of a needle depends
a liquid sphere, the static
aftermath of rain. It reflects
other branches, needles, suspended
beads of water which reflect

each sphere and through
each sphere, each coalescence
on the sphere of the mind,
a house with an open door

and through the door a window,
through the window a garden
gone beyond seed, beyond speech
where there is a blaze of sunlight
on broad bronze leaves.

Sharing Visions

To Sally Page, who shared
this vision with me.

Leaving the dry stream, the forest
behind, you clamber over barbed
wire with husband, children.
"Mother," your daughters cry
pointing at the mountain,
"can you see the old woman?"

The sun's glare on her hands
is blinding to you but draws
the jays, the jackdaws wheeling
from their roosts in the evergreens
lowering over her house. They descend
on her in a cloud as blue and gray
as the mountain, as opaque.

"Who is she?" You grasp their hands.
"She's never been known by name.
It is her house you see there
at the base of the mountain.
The fourth wall is the cave
where she labours. . .
She hardly ever comes out."

The wind bays around the mountain.
The old woman is wringing her hands.
You see your husband's hand is stained
with tannin. It turns in yours.
The children's questions lisp like leaves.
Who is she? Who is she?

"Mother, why is she calling you?"
Shuddering you back toward the dry
stream, the forest. The scene plays again.
The barbed wire tears the hem of your dress,
their fingernails tear at your skin like briars.

Turning back you see them rooted
on the perimeter of the field
with outstretched arms. Dark cypress.
All summer, without you, the three
of them have laboured under the sun.

You go alone toward the old woman.
She calls in a voice insistent
as the wind. The hands she wrings
are brittle, sharp enough
to cut the mouths of jackdaws,
jays. She doesn't notice.

She is looking up at you
wringing her untarnished hands.
"Help me. Come with me
to the cave. I'm old.
Without you I won't live
to see my work completed."
You know you can help her.
You know it will take years.

Your husband and children rustle,
restless, at the edge of forests.
"Mother, what does she want?"
You wave to them. You wave
with arms as bright as metal.
You have already deserted the sun.

Your hands wheel back, bright
birds, and descend on hers.

Still Water

I've come here hoping to see your face
again. Instead, you appear at the edge
of the forest behind me, dressed
in your silver gown, calling,
"Come dance, come dance, my darling."
The moon erodes on the river.

Grandmother, I have found a silver lover.
He covers me like your gown.
I am trapped in a circle of light.
I'm green at this. I want to be beside
it all, cloud on the moon's face,
a thorn imbedded in its eye.
I want to stay here with you.

Grandmother, the moon is a pared nail.
It won't disappear. My shadow
keeps surfacing like a man
ten days drowned. You're dead
and have been dead a year--
but your voice wells from the trees
each night calling me to dance, to dance.

Was this your gift? Your voice
like a hand on my shoulder forces
me to turn from your face, blank
river, and to find in that inexhaustible
light which falls through an arch
of black leaves each night the threat
of solace. How could you? I was content.

You always exposed me to beauty so dazzling
I never thought to covet-- more.
Joy: the sun's recurrence. Recurrence
of a wind which crests a deep green sea
of leaves with silver and shows me
my blindness. Shows me I want
all this. Day, and the play of light
on still and moving water.

Suttee

To my grandfather, d. November, 1974,
and grandmother, d. April, 1975.

i

One bright blue leaf repeats
in each of the stained glass windows.

The altar cloth glitters
over your remains.

Under its gauze shroud
the cross gleams
green.

A minutely particulate white.
Crabapple petals on new grass.
Ashes.
Maggots.

ii

Only pink stamens remain
on the leafless trees.
There is no wind.

Earthworms, disengaged
by the rains,
lie stranded on the asphalt.

Suffused with blue.
As if they too once pulsed
blood and had suffocated--

like you, quietly,
in the middle of a dream--
like you, burrowing

down deeper into sleep
trying to reach
again that old man gray

with heart-ache
at the very moment
of his last spasmodic breath.

Fidelity

1

There were such inversions
 after the old man died.
 You began to call him blithe,
 and immediately re-upholstered the chair
 in which he had writhed
 on the truth like a knife.
 He never understood.

You hugged me when I came back
 in August: "Please talk to him."
 I tried to explain: "Grandfather,
 it is my life. I owe no one."
 He clutched at his stuttering heart
 and did not deny it, but blind
 with grief felt through the air
 and touched my hair, my cheek.

"Forgive-- and be made whole."
 You said, coming to meet me
 in that dark hallway--
 and turned away, having touched
 me as he had done, having now,
 since he was gone, to express
 the whole truth by yourself.

2

After Christmas you are still weak, listless.
 "It's in my back. I can't sit up straight."
 In the department of nuclear medicine
 your cells flash like comets across the screen
 but you don't see them. They have forgotten
 to say you can keep your eyes open.

"Lying there I had such odd thoughts.
 Your grandfather and I were Siamese twins.
 In the middle of winter marigolds
 and mums were blooming again.
 You and your son had come for a picnic.
 No. I don't want you to come. Not yet.
 They say I'm not meant to be upset."

3

I was going to make you come and visit.
Cross the threshold. I hadn't known
you'd made grandfather drive you over in the fall.
You didn't knock because you didn't want to
come in. "It would have been too hard for him
but I had to make some kind of contact."

All those months I thought they were gifts
from a diffident lover. I should have known
only you'd choose licorice and Pilgrim's Progress.
"It was on sale. I couldn't resist.
I bought copies for both of us."
We laughed and each confessed we had found
it dull, plodding. Put it aside, half-read.

4

Through your death, my cousin
and I meet, become friends.
She says, "Look at my bathrobe--
it's Gram's." I chose
jewels and cooking utensils.
We dress. Put on the perfume
you gave me for my birthday.
It smells like you. We take
"Major Barbara" from the shelf.
We read and drink champagne.
Our accents get progressively
more British. We begin to sing
your favorite hymn:
"We plow the fields and scatter
the good seed on the land."