

we walk toward the wires  
 you whisper: what does the pattern mean?  
 I shake my head

through the center of the grid  
 red putty pushes out  
 shaping to a sagging ball

the hawk whirls  
 great wings slap the wind  
 we huddle closer together

a scream slashes from the building  
 I lean toward you: it's started  
 scream after scream bellies out  
 to where we stand inside  
 the lights go on figures move  
 the screams dull to whimpers  
 I touch your arm: we must go

no wait  
 you edge nearer the grid press your body against the wires  
 parts of your flesh push through forming sagging balls  
 I try to pull you away you slap me

come we must go!  
 no I'm staying!

I leave you

sticking there

you scream after me:

what does the pattern mean!

-- Ottone M. Riccio

Belmont, Massachusetts

### The Doll House

Say, this is some doll house; they're  
servicing martinis on the cocktail  
table. -- Today

Allowed the darkest corner of the trunk  
 The Duke and Duchess gradually grow old  
 And chipped, their fires unlit, their hallways cold.  
 What could they do? They had to turn to drink.

All of the shutters closed, and curtains drawn,  
 Another room is shut off every year.  
 The servants lose no chance to overhear,  
 And everything they hear they tell the town:

About the son, a known adulterer  
Who finally ran off; their youngest gambles;  
Behind its pillars, the east wing's a shambles;  
Their girl was ruined by the gardener.

The Duchess is a shadow among more  
Shadows of heirlooms sold. The family jewels  
Are paste. The Duke defends forgotten duels:  
"My dear, there is no honor anymore."

And what lies in the bottom of a glass?  
Ladies with parasols and gliding swans,  
Chateaus whose shadows float on lakes and lawns.  
Now everything once gold has turned to brass.

Their carpets are not from the Orient.  
No peer has come to leave his calling-card.  
Their days are done; their nights are evil-starred.  
They cannot pay the servants nor the rent,

Nor change, nor end. And even if they could  
Escape the darkness turned to tedium  
Of trunk and closet, why should they become  
A little more of man, and less of wood?

-- Martha Grimes

Silver Spring, Maryland

### The Nightmare Is Over

I'd always been a great  
lover of books  
polar ends of a continuum

Lerwick, principal town  
of the Shetlands  
founded by Dutch smugglers  
in 1670  
Shetland=Zetland.

In the Zetlands as elsewhere  
children get born  
old people die  
in a water cycle,

people try to get in touch with Blake  
thru the Chevreul pendulum  
automatic writing.

Bewildering multiplicity  
of gods & goddesses.