

an evening at the theatre

a limo pulls to curb
her first husband was in the air force
a yellow jacket makes her hair stand up
he plays a saxophone under trees
one child in yellow dress dances at street pole
he wouldn't even cut umbilical cord
she ate cheesecake with cherries
this is what you win when you work
for Mary Kay cosmetics

she opens door of limo
a man with muscles
tight black t-shirt
stretched across his chest
climbs out
cherry sprays water
over gardens
black clouds bring
out umbrellas
hustling patrons
Cindy Lauper
Cher will be here - oh my god!
doors open to theatre
mass of colors
shapes walk through doors

door to limo closes
rain drops fall
but not under trees
she extends umbrella
to keep her cigarette dry
coffee
gin with ice

cherry red lips
savor the taste of it
pointed yellow shoes
match her hair
he puts away his saxophone
only to bring it out again
holding umbrella
she smokes in rain
thunder cracks
drops of rain enlarge
increase

limo drives away
she got out of hospital yesterday
car seat for baby was placed
in wrong spot of back seat
two men hug
smile
walk together
wind blows empty coffee cups
she needs ticket to obtain hearing aid "thingee"
lightning flash
lights go down
voice speaks of cell phones
pagers
music blasts
play begins

on stage

dyed red over
brown hair chopped
bristled by anger
face quilted
with fat
lips sag
lies slither out

a victim
over and over
never at fault
she enjoys stardom

final performance
her limp mouth
and forficate tongue
condemn me

years of

defiance with father
loud disputes
critical sarcasm
slamming doors

running away
no words to anyone
six months later
telephone calls

she's at corner
telephone booth
body shaking
eyes blackened

raped she claims

by a black man
took her watch
and shoes

I took her home
fed her
gave her clothes
money and a bed

she's gone
next day
when I return
from work

married twice
to men
who abused her
forever a victim

always on stage

Sacramento Memories

redwood and lemon trees
filled a dusty dirt yard
"Queen for a Day" on TV
in our landlord's backyard
a doll house
(bigger than our flat)
white painted shelves
lined with dolls

he would unlock the glass door
usher me through each pristine
white painted room
with bleached wood floors
not a speck of dirt or dust
visible on any space
absolute quiet
like a fresh snowfall

eyes in pale porcelain faces
followed me
lips fire engine red
seemed to whisper
"hold me"
each dress hand stitched
waiting for a child's
careful caress

the door to the doll house
was closed, locked
I and all children shut out
dolls entombed
touched only by the hand
that placed them there
our landlord
with the key on a necklace