

Coleen T. Houlihan

**Fate**

As soon as you accept  
the tale three sisters tell  
of heaven or hell  
and slip into the heavy  
wool parka  
which conforms to fit  
the smallest infant or  
the tallest man, the myth  
becomes a plan, and what  
is to be doomed or exalted  
walks over and lays  
a pomegranate seed  
into the palm of your hand,  
so dark and shiny  
that you can see finally  
your reflection  
and know whether  
you lay crumbled  
or stand.

**Remains**

It does not take long  
for a thin coat of dust  
to find the wine bottles.  
I trace my finger through it,  
virgin snow peak, a fingerprint  
on dark sloping glass.  
My mother says she would  
cling to life, that no coma or  
vegetable state would deter her from  
her will to live. I sing songs,  
“And if I die today...”  
But momma reacts badly,  
as if death spoken aloud is a wish  
to God. She makes me laugh.  
So much fear of the inevitable.  
She does not drink wine the way I do,  
a dark red glass poured every night.  
She does not have my fingerprints.