

*Carol Lynn Grellas*

**Business Trip**

Sometimes when he's away on business,  
I miss the sound of yelling through the house;  
the kind of bickering my mom and dad  
used to do when she'd forget to put butter  
out in the morning for his muffins and jam.  
Or when the teakettle would hum its aria  
in their lime green kitchen and he'd be too

lazy to remove it from the burner; so much  
easier to scream her name in an urgent tone.  
She'd appear with a tartan apron on and whisk  
that metal pot off her little pink stove, manicured  
fingers and all, doing a little spin around  
the basket weave brick floor, all the time  
smiling like Donna Reed. I used to wonder

what she was thinking with all that wrangling  
going on, corrupting the stillness of the breakfast  
hour. Who knew a little hollering would become  
necessary as my caffeine fix at sunrise  
and loneliness would be defined as the quiet  
when no one's requesting a refill or another  
piece of toast just one inch out of reach.

**Madonna and Mars**

In my dream the craggy rocks  
are crystallized along the axial tilt

with an opalescent glow of midnight  
as solar winds sing the angel's hymns

around the Virgin Mary.  
There she stands in all her glory

waiting for me to arrive. Barefoot,  
in my white gown, diamonds

drape me like a lit up Christmas tree—  
stepping over meteorite, I am a Venetian

goddess crossing waterways as she waits  
her body floating above the outflow

of weeping channels that bleed holiness  
upon the Roman god of war.

Skimming polar ice caps  
though the atmosphere is freezing

somehow I am undeniably warm.  
Her arms raised she prays for me to come.