

## A BATHING GOWN A GIRL CAN MAKE

A girl usually wears a costume. Plain blue is suitable for tightly clinging knickers fastened on by buttons. The part not shown in the picture slips in and out of the front, which is slit. White bone buttons are made firm to cut up the legs. If it is inconvenient to machine the knickers, stitch for an inch or two in position. If the girl understands anything, it will not do to make the costume an ample room.

## THE ONLY HOUSE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The stove doesn't work. The food is painted  
on the refrigerator door. No stairs join

the three levels, and the residents flit  
between them: colorful, mute birds. Days

pass with the click of a switch and no matter  
if Baby bathes with his clothes on, or Mother

in her fitted purple jacket, heeled shoes,  
and with her wild silken hair spends a week

facedown on the laundry room floor, or  
if when Father goes to work he is really only

waiting behind the sunroom to come back home.  
There is a birthday party nearly every day,

no fear of death or failure, no mortgage  
to pay, no money at all. And if the tiny pink

phone in the kitchen never rings, and the doors  
don't open, and if the family can't bend

their knees to kneel in the warm square of light  
on the plastic-wood floor, they still lie

ready for you to set the table, snap the garden  
fence back into place, position the pink crib

next to the blue, fix the girl onto her rocking horse,  
and let your hand push the thing until it topples.

## THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED

Sun silences the house. Between bough  
and twig, a splintered branch. Mother stands behind  
the wall. It is miniature: the baby's coffin

floating rooms like a canoe at dawn, smudging  
wood floors like water. I want so much to see  
his face, eyelids blue and shining under lamplight,

but he is wordless, invisible. We paint Easter eggs  
for him, the prince in the moving tomb,  
and find them in the grass all blue and spotted, slick

with baby slugs. Before the service, I refuse to wear  
my dress. Want to look older for the limo ride.  
Mother is a silhouette coming downstairs.

The women have eaten fruit and drunk their coffee.  
The sun rises over the lawn where forgotten  
eggs hide. The Lord is risen indeed.

Lilies light the way to the humming car, full  
of believers. I sit to the right of my father.  
My cousin's dress is too big for me.

## SISTERS

the duckling in the shoebox dying fluttered fast  
its leaves and twigs I am green  
transparent sister told my sister her legs are not  
gorgeous crawling to the bathroom  
said you both like that anorexic look but not me  
on TV a wrestling match the mean  
woman in leather tore up the drawing from that retard  
who loved her once I pissed my pants  
laughed too hard sat in the driveway for an hour  
on the bus the drunk girl cried  
I've just been through hell I'm supposed to be  
a bridesmaid where is my dress  
I've lost the two people the African Gray in summer  
flew up into the trees from my father's  
shoulder where are the two people that I love?