

Length

Length is a graceful word.

Sinews stretched, muscles flexed,

It begins reaching up and over.

Then rests soft, curvaceous.

Ending sensuously, lips parted

Tongue to teeth. Length.

For My Mother

I have on good authority:
the fairy godmother's gown
is made of soft blue flannel
with a hidden pocket
where she keeps her Schnapps.

Prior to the singing,
Bippity-boppity-boo-ing,
she was reading and reclining
a tabby at her feet,
dark chocolates to the side.

Now at the pumpkin:
wand and hand keep the chorus
as she turns her head
and sneaks a sip
of liquid butterscotch.

The spirits keep her giddy.
She's got a lot of weight
on her shoulders, you know
fixing everyone's lives—
it ain't easy.

A little help is needed
to keep the magic going
to keep a smile showing
to see-off Cinderella
before returning to her bed.

On The Bus

“Has the nineteen come yet?”
“No, it’s usually right after the twenty-one.”
You don’t usually talk to strangers
that you pass along the street,
but this is an exception.
You’re regulars.
You discuss routes and break-downs
Like old men discuss politics.
Here I am with my shopping bag or work satchel.
Standing at the stop I feel like Greta Garbo.
This is a different way of life.

Instead of yelling at other drivers,
we read, sleep, or talk.
“Where’s that woman we pick up on Wenzel?”
“She was coughing yesterday. I hope she’s OK.”
Our choice (or sometimes not) to ride the bus
relinquishes control.
But we gain autonomy, community.

The first few days you ride,
you’re five years old again.
Small, lost.
But then you learn your routes.
Some of everyone else’s.
You know there’s always another bus.
You learn to be patient.
You practice thinking ahead.
It can be miserable to walk downtown with no coat.
You gain the confidence to get on
with a bunch of strangers and
claim your seat:
Bold glance down the aisle
then a quick decision, immediate execution.

The man in the back talks to himself.
The girl in the pink skirt is studying to be a doctor.
That haggard-looking woman over there
works seventy hours a week.
Driving myself to the mall, I might have seen her
and thought she was mean, old, ugly.
Now I know she’s just tired.
That boy that just got on has blue hair.
Last week it was green.
Driver is telling everyone to have a good evening,
even though it’s 7:30 am
The afternoon driver seems to know everyone
And I mean **everyone**.
Who am I to them?
The one who always reads?
The lady in the yellow rain slicker
that sometimes writes poetry
On the bus.

Transformation

The transition from maiden to mother
is a cruel and confusing spell--
losing carefree playtime
to the yoke of responsibility.

The confidence of youth gone,
without the wisdom of the crone.

Only knowledge which brings
neither peace, nor clarity.

Time to exchange

learning for toil

flirtation for faithfulness

lean hips for rounded belly.

The mirror reflects—

sometimes lines,

sometimes a silly girl.

Who is this shapechanger?

And what is her true form?

The End

Have I one life to live?

Or a hundred to spare?

How can I know?

How can I care?

Will I pass on in slumber?

Or in a violent scene?

Oh, I do not want to know!

Though I hope t'will come in dreams.