

**Forever a Bridesmaid**

My grandma used to tell me,  
*Your eyes and lips are so pretty;*  
*you could have been a girl.*

That was years before she caught me  
smearing her lipstick across my big lips, and  
wearing the old bridesmaid's dress and dyed  
satin pumps that I had admired  
in the back of her closet.

I had built up the courage  
to try it on, and let the billow  
of the sleeves swallow my chubby arms.

I can still feel her eyes catching me,  
And the sensation that the pearls draping  
My neck were suddenly wrapped tightly around it.  
When she told me to put her clothes back  
on the hangers where they belonged.

I wished

I could become one of her dresses –  
a beautiful gown of satin and lace,  
hanging in the back of her closet –

and stay there forever.