Contains five poems

When Your Mother Grows Old

When your mother grows old her voice gets tiny and decamps, nestles in a tootling drum, a bee winging in your ear.

Just like her body, insect rump with ineffectual arms and stick legs, medically preserves its physicality, reverse-births in your womb.

You point her around pylons, mortally afraid of the siren when your back will bear her shell, when her sandals deflate, her wheels splay, her wings snap. There you go

pitch her porcelain chalice on the column, high as a voltage mast. She balls up, while you're a ball of strength. The wind plucks her vocal chords, how she was everything to you.

It was true. It was by design. You are her tomb.

Staying Power

To avoid the queue I jumped through the window. My shin caught a new moon of a curtain.

The wisecrack consulted, manning a desk. He donned a black frock and didn't look at me because I was a woman.

It took him long till he had cracked his knuckles into place. Before we began, he tickled his beard, of uneven color, a ghost of old and new.

His room made a terrible impression on me.

That may be why I was profoundly shaken when he said: "Just follow the rules, and I will tell you your future."

At gym practice, the former prime minister was profusely sweating it out on the stepper: "Hey, how is it you're not someone else. But no, it was him. Was he training for rehabilitation? I heard the instructors squabbling to teach him Pilates. Apparently he wants it for free, alongside with sun and air. And that's what he got and cheers for longevity.

In the kaleidoscope made-up portraits flit by, one by one, and I light them through, remember their lines, their memorable works, as well as I can, as I sit on the edge of my bedstead at night, under the lamp and creak.

"I'd better go to sleep now."
I lie down, douse the lamp. I will dream, steadily now, of my own insignificance, but I will do no harm, and rise on the sustainable pj's list.

Book Sprite

It's perfectly fine to feel envy. Say yes, snatch up the extra mug with cocoa. Wraith, get lost.

At the birthday bash that leather football and speaking doll should be mine. My parents fib,

as money shakes their tree. They don't get that the organ teases my fingers, but grates

my ears. I pine for Debussy instead of Bach, all the vast ocean of emotions kept in or

thrown out: not sure! Their company I'll tame like the pony I would kick then whip in its stomach.

My parents, wary, deprived. Listen to them, nah, maybe when I'm as old. I flex my toes, appoint

myself guard in the schoolyard. Bash a weak undergrown clock. My hair is pulled, my name

abused. I take refuge in the library as I got nowhere with people. Winnow

books. The wind will but the devil won't play with me. Some sprites have got an easy

life, but this at least I don't want.

Flying Pyjamas

The paisley pyjamas fly over the world, because I clicked on them,

for the cold nights.

Star-shaped in its packet folded like joyous origami

they gallop along the clouds

tethered to my filament. I wave while handlers zip it along. There is cloth,

and the cloth means

accord. The station master signs made in -- ho, stop please, I almost

forgot: before my pyjamas

were rethought into a fold-out, they headed into flight, as long as the last

day. The sun never winked

there, but lay passive behind the spitting fire of sewing machines & moonlight

faces whirring constellating

planets. I begin to feel a flicker of remorse.

Perhaps it wasn't such a good

idea to perpetuate the wings

of circulation. Because while I dream of the lacy fabric that renders

me invisible in sleep

I have fastened my pegs even steadier, greedier in the veins

of the gold mountains

where reserved gnomes toil to dig out the mistakes I punch.

What She Got

The lady in the next seat looks at my face, and leggings, to ask where I got them.

We came here to listen to antiquated music, but she is more interested in the plastic,

sly fashion imitation. The applause winds down, and we chat, after she says this

Mendelssohn reminds her of old Hollywood in the thirties. Me, I love all ages. Schmaltz,

she says, in the seat of schmaltz. Yet you never know, last year Mendelssohn was magnificent.

I lean over the balustrade and give her some leg space, the urbane immigrant

from the plain. We share the same profession but unlike me she doesn't enjoy it.

She whittled her students, so quick today, eluding her caustic wit, down to three.

Adults, please, she does not want to be a slow-coach psychologist. Next week

she'll fly to Amsterdam -- a coarse city I know well -- but not for the museums;

she's seen those already. I think I am getting this lady. When the full-blown Beethoven

bursts loose I poke my condom leg. Very real, very new, her cries are swamped.