

ESTA SEATON

Reprise

After the marches
after the telegrams
and the petitions
the letters to the editor
the speeches cheered
and booed
After that other poem I wrote
four years ago
when my husband said
"Maybe the war will be over
before the poem is published."
and I smiled
but believed in the possibility

After all that
like a scene shown over and over
on a motion-picture screen
by some maniac projectionist
who is fixated on the moment
when the throat is slashed by the knife
and you are roped to your seat in the theater
not really convinced of what is happening
struggling against paralysis
as in the terror of a mid-afternoon dream
when you try to wake to face the stranger
who is never in the room

there is no new news
on the evening newscast.
I sit at the dinner table
rolling a crumb of bread between my fingers,
planning my next move,
rehearsing arguments in a dead language
that will fall on dead ears,
and I see that my shoes are soaked with blood.