

Inheritance

Sally Stratford

I wear her name
and a two carat diamond
which, like a heavy rock of salt,
falls to the side between my fingers.
I'm sitting on a pink velvet chair
holding a tape recorder,
but she is asleep,
mouth open, skin loose
like pie crust draping over apples.

I want her to wake up and tell me stories
about how she slid down the banister
to meet the mayor in Bel Air,
or when Grandpa wouldn't let her eat,
so the green sequined dress
she wore to the country club would fit
like a waterfall of thin emeralds.
Still, she would eat chocolate
in the shadows of her closet.
"It always fit," she would say.

Soon this bed will be empty,
the electric blanket smooth
over her place,
reading glasses on the table
reflecting the afternoon sun.