

Ireland, young mothering, a first of much  
will not come again.

Sun of morning visible or not,

your intimate acquaintance with the Night  
says only this, this private arrival

bears forever repeating  
until there is no repeating at all.



## **The Rose Jar**

*Emma Lou Thayne*

Musky as the cedar drawer  
in Grandma's standing metal trunk,

a genie scent, improbable and  
distant as the sound of hooves on sand

in some Arabian tale read by Father  
in the hall between bedrooms to say goodnight.

Rose petals, five generations of fragile crinkles  
once supple, fresh, pressed on at a precious time

into the four-inch cloisonné on pointed golden legs  
fat as a Buddha tummy, bottled in

by a cloisonné hat with wobbly lifter,  
an ancient pine cone of blackened silver.

Lift it, raise the smooth bowl with its infinite expertise  
laid with tweezers into a miniature mozaic:

flowers rusty orange, circles and shields aged before aging  
curls of gold small smaller smallest and red,

edging a sapphire river spilled into dusky green.  
Watch. See the centuries of Chinese have their way.

Feel the careful hands that plucked each piece in place.  
Raise the lid, bring the smooth round closer. Tiny gusts

of history waft the gatherings of births, graduations,  
weddings, funerals, celebrations—one petal each,

pink, red, yellow, orange, crisping, sinking into petals  
then to holy mash, salted into decades collecting

but never filling to the top the space, mysterious  
space, defying definition, only wafting life

like some subtle, still surprising breath of God.