

Riddles and Lies · *Christine Zawadiwsky*

Death is asleep.
And in my dream
the earthworm with five hearts
is the hero,
not the moth
who's swallowed up by a flame
or the man who's rusty
in the particulars of love,
or you who make me laugh
with jokes and kisses
and come and go
and go and come again.
Death is asleep.
Though we're buried in the snow
there's still fire and a baby,
a baby on which there crawls
a caterpillar,
a baby that I've held
in my bed and in my body.
Death is asleep.
Feed me salt so I won't die.
Feed me riddles and lies
till a halo shines
bright and still
all around my body.
Feed me the story
about women who scream at men,
and I'll feed you the story
about women who are whispering,
whispering about men
and screaming at babies,
shivering and sweltering
in the sun and the snow.
Make me laugh
about the baby who swallowed
a butterfly,
about the mother who told
a tremendous lie
and was never heard from again,
who was sent to live with the fear
of never-ending emptiness.

Feed me with your words,
feed me snow so
I won't die.
As long as my mind
is still puzzling and hungry.
As long as I continue
to kiss you good-bye.