

MY FATHER'S HOUSE

In my father's house . . .
a plate full of chicken bones,
and a wide eyed arch
opening the hallway.
I remember before the house caved in—
cushions of gingerbread
and a bicycle with a wet spine
lurching in the rain.
Two brothers pushed its brittle frame
through the back door.
The whining of those silvery bones
and the coughing of chains
were as hoarse as the moon's.

The summer of the hurricane
the house fell.
It was a storm of voices,
the winds from my father's belly
then slow rains
watering his chin.
It was the crying of my father
over the chicken plates,
or maybe over the broken back step
or the bare peach tree.

The summer the house fell
its walls lay down,
breathing like tired men.
The curtains whispered,
then folded their flowery ears.
The china splashed.

It was a storm of glass,
of broken colors.
The eyes of my father were splintered
and bled with crystal.

Only the cat could see—
loosening its fingers
on a wide, backyard birch
with the gold spoons of its eyes, saying

The house is falling
The house is falling

with the gold flash from its eyes
warning the tree.