

## BABY SITTING

The hen has slipped the paper dolls  
into her nest. We have left the lawn  
because of notes the parents left.  
We have watered the rows of flowers  
whiffing greedily of the dirt.  
Later,  
in their lighted room, I tell  
their story of a dune buggy  
on the moon. The older girl grins,  
for she remembers.

There is the steel moon now,  
in wounded vanity  
because they have pierced her ear.  
She has been their gypsy,  
she has been their pirate;  
she, in that, has not lost track  
of the terrible oceans of waves.

Is it that she sulks?  
Bone-brain, pock-face,  
what did you expect to see  
with your white eye?  
She expected cloves and loves,  
combs of black, of lavender;  
after all,  
for years she has let us play  
in her shining hair.

They played horse on the piano stool.  
It crouches moony on its claws,  
on the flattest piece of ground,  
a shrouded pony.  
I shake the cloth  
from the saddle.  
Behind I see a delinquent  
snarl of hair  
in the wilting hydrangea.

The girl is watching the moon.  
It is shaped like what moves slowly—  
her roof, her net  
for the constant sky.