

of dream, on the cusp of moon, I see myself  
young and white nightgowned walking deep  
at night through the Highland Zoo that surrounded  
my French grandmother's house. From the bay  
window, my mother calls me back; her voice  
is a clarinet. When neon was new,  
and every yard was filled with cherry and apple  
trees, the plaster saints I lit candles in front of  
always had bare feet, and it never rained stones.  
Then, my mother on hot nights slept  
with her head on a windowsill. Now  
a freeway runs through her place  
of those dreams. Still within walking  
distance, some nights I go and watch  
the cars' lights burst shining from black  
then disappear into stars,  
into peonies, then prayers.

### THE BRIGHT WATERFALL OF ANGELS

Everywhere that summer there were angels,  
hanging over the lake piers deflated with prayer,  
blowing like soap bubbles past night windows,  
flying from the weekend colored skirts  
of young girls. In August, under the full  
moon, I walked Oakland Ave., and a night  
bus, windows burning yellow with angels, passed.  
And still, I could see people praying for more  
bird angels, drug angels, kaiser roll angels, money  
angels, love angels, health angels, rain angels.  
There were angels with hearts large as bagpipes  
who circled our village's ice cube houses  
and flew bright loud into our bang nights.  
There were angels in movie houses and in sweet corn  
stands, and angels who dropped like catalpa  
snakes from summer. One angel followed

me into our Chang Cheng Restaurant. Where  
were the angels that summer when the neighbor-  
hood women were being hunted and ripped  
open like field animals? Or when the man  
who walked away from DePaul Rehab gave up  
on my garage? When I came home from “The Wizard  
of Loneliness” the Flight for Life  
helicopter was landing in my front yard.  
And a young man was leaning against my garage,  
his throat an awful open clown smile.  
Rivers and steams of dark blood  
ran down the alley. All the children  
awakened by the helicopter ran barefoot  
and pajamad through the actual  
blood and night. Mary,  
the neighborhood nurse, kept telling  
everyone there was a murderer loose.  
“No one could do that much damage to themselves.  
I’m a nurse, I’m telling you that no one could  
do that much damage to themself.”  
And the police, and firefighters, and pilot,  
and attendants their rubber gloved hands filled  
with the moon, and someone held up the knife  
the man had used on himself. Off they rolled  
him on a cot into the helicopter.  
When they took off lighted and loud into the mid-  
night sky, I saw angels of despair, windfull  
and spinning happy on the helicopter blades.  
There were angels who wrote their names on leaves,  
and show-offs who rode August’s tornadoes.  
Nights the sky was often a thunder of angels,  
a heat lightning sky, where angel wings fit  
together in crossword puzzle perfection.  
At the State Fair that August, the great  
chefs of Wisconsin came to convince the world  
of the superior beauty of carved cheese over carved  
ice for table centerpieces, and although originally

they had come planning to carve cows and swans,  
always the cheddar blocks turned to the gold  
cheesy beauty of angels. Angels hid  
behind apples, behind goldfinches, hid in foot-high  
Mexican-stuffed toads who stood forever on  
their back legs, their front legs shellacked forever  
into playing red painted concertinas.  
And if someone would have come to you as many  
years as you are old ago, and told you:  
You will be slapped around, a man will cut your  
mouth open, only because he says he loves you,  
and you will have to give up lovers, before they are,  
and children before they are yours;  
friends will call you from sexual assault centers  
and their stitched together voices will tell you  
things done to them that you will never be able to forget.  
Some friends you will bury and children and parents, too.  
(Your mother and father will breathe flowers  
from their graves.) Your body's skin and bones  
will cartwheel around you, tilt-a-whirl around you  
until you are nauseous and dizzy and uncertain.  
The money angel will never like you; often  
you will sleep with razor blades. Often  
you will fall out of the trap door of yourself  
and have to climb back up and start over, and  
sometimes the angels will help and often they won't,  
and you can never count on either. And if someone  
had come to you, as many years ago as you are old  
right now, and told you all this, and more,  
would you sign up for the bright waterfall of angels?  
Would you be silent? Would you whisper, or shout:  
Bring on the tour, the bright waterfall of angels tour?