

Now an old friend, buoyant with sex, approaches  
my car window. He's about to tell me  
of the carton of Luckys someone gave him  
as payment for bending over a desk  
and moaning, "Yes, Daddy." He longs to be  
forgiven the bargain of his body  
for a weekend supply of smokes; he  
jokes about how easily married men  
give in, how much he values his freedom,  
how no one will ever tie him down.  
I've known this man for years. He taught me  
about music and the heart of a young boy  
rescued by the spirit from the South Bronx,  
how the heart stays true and waits for the body.

### THE MIRACLES

I am a miracle. Not  
the only miracle. A fox

living in the dark perfume  
of the reservoir

counts. You,  
from your father's bed—

pure, intact, that  
aqua light. Is it

greedy to gather berries  
from the cliff-face,

gulp them, your other hand  
free to clasp air? I

sensed a hollow where  
his small flame lingered

among ash. Now color  
pours from my hands.

When I touch you,  
the heat startles. You say:

Here are the miracles:  
the fox, the berries,

the child, grown lovely  
and gorged with light.

### CONSTANCE, 1958

When asked what she wanted to be when she  
grew up, my friend Connie said: a prostitute.  
And I knew she was better than I was,  
harder the way metal gets when it comes  
through fire and I felt scared and unable  
to fight back. I wanted to be a nun,  
a calm woman in a sky blue habit,  
and I feared prostitutes, gangsters, pimps,  
like I'd feared my friend Connie when she ran  
through the sprinkler with her clothes on and we both  
knew she'd get a beating. Her father  
was wild too, went searching for the Lost  
Dutchman's Mine and sent his whole family  
to the poorhouse. Connie's grandmother  
was a matriarch, my mother said, but  
it sounded more like the way I've heard  
people say bitch since. She owned a house  
in the country and she took her grand-  
daughter in when her crazy son went