

## SOME YEARS FROM THE LIFE OF A GIRL

I greed upon my mothers milk,  
see fathers seldom given smile,  
listen to a lullaby.  
Smell sunshine aired into a handknit blanket,  
brush against a soft, stuffed bear  
and slip to sleep.

Safe.  
Protected.

I'm everything that they expected.

In the kindergarten room, I smell a vague waxed chaulkiness,  
And finger the starched sauciness of eyelet ruffling round my twirly skirt.  
At recess, flirt until John Andersen relinquishes a chunk of his sponge toffee.  
It melts under my tongue.

This year I hear Old Santa make an earnest covenant  
To find, before the 25th, a doll with shiny hair,  
As curled as mine.  
He whispers to my Grandpa  
And soon I see her on the rug beside a sleek doll buggy.

Energetic  
Teasing, ,  
Coy.

I am still what they enjoy.

I hear a ring. The telephone.  
My friend confides in me  
about the boy she likes  
This week.

[Her mother says next year  
in Junior High  
she can have  
Parties!]

Bedroom alarm shows five o'clock.  
I waited after school  
but she forgot our math  
Again  
When he said "Hi, Suzanne".

[I forget too.  
Dave plays the guitar well.]

Exploring my new-swollen breasts  
encased in a Petal Burst 32-A,  
I find that I'm too small, too soft and too  
round.

[I read babysitting  
a book of Gayles Fathers,  
Giving Heroines breasts

Large  
Firm and  
Upthrust.]

I have nothing to offer.

Dismayed by my strong legs  
I devour diet candy  
Exercise frantically  
To slight avail.

I smell my oozing menstrual blood  
and hide behind safeness - a double locked door.  
The bath tub, my refuge, is private and cleansing.

[Deodorant powder in shiny blue tins,  
A gift of my mothers,  
a gift from my Mother,  
Is plain ineffectual.  
Someone might Know.]

Betrayed by my body!

I melt,  
I mold,  
Constrict,  
And Squeeze.

I have to change so much to please.

## CHILD MORE THAN ONE QUARTER CENTURY OLD

I view from underneath this veil  
the near four hundred guests.  
And try to sift the scent of my bouquet,  
Sadly unseparate from the flowers of all the bridesmaids.

The mirror shows a goddess smoothing lengths of sheeny satin  
that tonight become black lace.  
But I feel like Cinderella.  
[Still the same girl  
who survives by switching roles at midnight.]

And I feed him bits of wedding cake  
He nibbles at his whim.

Do you hear the organ set the tone with measures from "Oh Promise Me"?

[That since I'm offering up  
the neutral self which you require,  
Because I'm ever-pleasant, and defer to your desire  
You will take care of me?]

A virgin bride who "caught" the right man,  
At eighteen, how I've achieved.  
Mother,  
in her petalled hat,  
Looks tired, proud,  
And most relieved.

Pretty,  
Young,  
Autoclave Clean.  
They envy him his luck. It  
Seems he's found a girl who's carved  
Herself  
Into the Perfect Puppet.

From afar I watch my fingers sort among the basement boxes,  
[The van arrives tomorrow]  
While I listen for our children creaking rythms on the swingset.  
[Their Daddy left on Thursday.]

Unexpectedly, my hands unearth a note once tied to flowers  
reading "Had to send TWO dozen  
to say thank you for my SON."

But the scent upon this faded card is one of mustiness today  
While still-white paper on the dresser tells another story.  
["You three have become a burden.  
I can't spend myself in carrying you  
through Life. Perhaps your family  
will Help."]

I taste nothing but the swollen, bloated numbness in my throat.

Shocked.  
Resentful.  
Hurt.  
Confused.  
Old. Fragmented. Frightened. Used.

by "Prefict"  
Ed. 3

I turn from my old beige, so pleasant self  
Wigs, Padded bras, Contour Make-up  
Are all condemned to rest.

Now, let myself feel color more  
Reds passion,  
Purples fantasy,  
The promise of growth that's ever present in Green.  
Blacks No-ness,  
Whites potentiality.  
I feel akin to yellow, hue of hope.

Then,  
Touching Gingerly,  
I find strength to BE some shades  
Though not yet Blue Tranquility.  
[I lack the courage  
flee in Fear  
from my Neutrality.]

I now receive the strong Earth Smells.  
Since done with straining ears

Reflected in the reassuring voices that  
They use  
To Calm a Child.  
My ears can now receive  
Both Sobs and Songs  
Of those I feel Love with.  
I share meal times with many friends.  
They are not obligated to come here.

We Choose  
to be  
Together.

In Anger,  
Ecstasy,  
Elation.

I'm working out MY expectations.