

Superstar

sitting sideways in the green velvet chair
 I hear him sing, *a chair is still a chair/
 even when there's no one/ sitting there*
 my mind goes in circles, spinning hair

greasing Grandma's fingers to endless
 plaits, on Sunday after days of picking
 parts, at the plastics factory, she presses
 my curls, after scrubbing and soaking

I shine like polished stars before the dawn
 she pours coffee black as tar, woos and fawns
 while cooking sausage, split flat and crispy
 the eggs fried hard, the rice sweet and sticky

floral drapes thin the sunlight, breeze zooms
 teeth combing clouds of cumulous kink
 carrying tunes to a room that *is* a room
doo doo doo doo doo floats the air then sinks

cushions of yellow high back chairs, nearby
 brown encyclopedias multiply
 mirror over mantel décor: one set
 tureen, matching mugs, German castles etched

blades of grass cut to obedient blocks
 guard this brick bungalow that *is* a home
 out back Grandpa reveals fragments flocked
 north toward a new kind of "Up South" home

aside garage, tomatoes grow. I pick
a plump one, listening to Johnnie preach
bout these last two dollars, as blue notes lick
and Grandpa sings along, shuffling his feet

cords crack the smoke of BBQ ribs, hot
red links, charred and stuffed slit a flimsy bun
I bite, balance bent crown stuck in a knot
atop cramped curtsy in kitchen chair, spun

coils twisting, trying not to shed a tear
Grandma pulls tightly the last dark tendril
of hair, piano plays *so sweet and clear*
his voice sounds almost close enough to feel

'til the song skips, ending Luther's live show
reminding me...*it's just the radio*