

## **A Faithful Wife Dreams of her Ninety-Second Birthday**

When youth has slipped from out my grasp  
and the march of time turns blonde to gray,  
I will still reach for you with the same small hands  
that held you at thirty. And the chalk blue lines  
traced on tissue paper skin will still lead to a heart  
that beats steadily for you.

Love's rhythm,  
that eternal drummer.

And in that dusk of final years my mind will stir  
with thoughts of youth—supple skin and shining eyes  
and laughter not meant for other ears. The moments  
when I held my breath, foolishly believing  
I could save the time I spent with you  
bottled up inside myself,  
like the roar of the sea  
still haunting a shell.

Countless mornings while the covers held you,  
I would slip away to wash dishes left behind  
on a previous evening too quickly dissolved

into night. On those mornings, as I shuffled  
amid the stray shoes and empty bottles,  
crumbs and coasters,  
I felt more and more  
like someone's wife.

Till all at once I found myself this person  
I had hoped to be. So whole, intact,  
despite the division I assumed must follow  
a life given, even willingly, to another.  
But here I am, still myself, but more myself  
because of you—A lover, a wife,  
eternally grateful  
at ninety-two.