

Diane McColley

A SINGLE SPRAY STILL SHINES

My father never asked for anything
except my mother.

From their wedding picture
they watch with lustered eyes,
her head a brown and his a golden sea.
They look like movie stars, the children say.
My father sang while he clipped the hedge,
Do-do-de-do;
my mother's alto spread among the suds.

She would complain he spoke too little; now
she lies on pillows and speaks not at all
except in rare reply. I had not thought
the mind might wane before the body withered;
the face is still so like the photograph's.
It is as if a daisy's petals rayed
about the stem yet, but without connection.
Still sweetness comes into her eyes when he
bends toward her, now and still her only stem.

She walks a little way; they roam the streets
around the convalescent home--deceptive name,
unless the convalescing's in some long, long run,
and not for the runner under the sun.
Perhaps she notes a flower or plucks a spray,
one spray of beauty left, and beauty clasped
to the last shred, the final ray.



Beverly Thomas