

Gray Jacobik

MALATCHA'S MARRIAGE

If ever on that bed of rocks  
a blessing came, it was disguised  
and failed a moment's need of it.  
He was not much of a lover, grabby,  
too predictable for her taste,  
though he loved her in his way  
and gave what little tenderness  
his tight-lipped kindred left him.  
She grew, as years piled  
a colorless linen higher and higher  
till it blocked her view,  
cranky and hard to abide.  
No wonder they argued.  
He beginning with a complaint--  
some dish uncooked--  
and she jumping, railing  
at his ingratitude. No  
embrace in his arms  
soothed her, and his kisses  
were no better than chagrin  
pushed to the edge of his tongue.  
Children, three of them, angels,  
delayed their parting  
and when they did one March,  
he setting out for Albuquerque,  
she resolved against the bitterness  
that brushed her like high grass,  
that was that, clean as a whistle,  
an "all clear" from the deck  
of a ship or some sea-going vessel.