

EVA ON VIEW

The strength drained to nothing in a few weeks,
after eighty some years of working
knuckle to the bone,
up at 5 o'clock to pick peas and limas
or peeling endless potatoes
and retro-fitting old dresses
and saving jar lids like they were ingots.

You could even remember the conjugation of Latin verbs
from an early teacher in Texas
where your father had taken you
when he was a cook, a hotel manager through the gold rush,
a train-travelling believer in *the search*.

You saw the same restless currents in me,
watched me write and teach and wander
AND EXPECT MORE OUT OF LIFE THAN I SHOULD HAVE,
watched me thread binder twine trough the eye of a needle
so you could use it to stitch up a moment's weakness.

This passionless Sunday night in
the all-too-typical funeral parlor
her body lies stuffed and propped on gathered cloth,
looking more like the Queen of England than anything else,
nothing to do with my grandmother, really,
a stale imitation of life.

The mortician, a one-handed man,
talks about his trip to Disneyworld, tells it
like he's been to heaven and back.

(Old Walt, worried the hereafter would be a let-down
after his own creations, froze himself for future use.)

The carpet, so deep it makes every footstep a shuffle
and my grandfather grabs my sleeve to keep from stumbling,
thinking about his turn, thinking about the lonesome wait.
He pulls me aside, admits,
"the biggest disappointment in my life
is that she went first,
I'll never forgive her for that."