

CATCHING THE CHICAGO BLUES

By Adrienne Wolfert

It's no christ this passion
between us. Once dead,
it has not resurrection,
what's said is said.

You can hang your hat
on your sister's clothes tree
sock it to me baby
whoooo---eee

It's sunset full of color
fading to dusk,
an opening to pain
an unwilling trust.

You can shake hands with brother
and forget the old fight
but you can't come home to baby
and make it all right.

sock it to me baby
whoooo---eee

Every woman's beauty
is sure to give way,
inevitable as evening
man's gonna stray

You can call your old man
when our bread is light
but you can't come home to baby
and make it all right.

sock it to me baby
whoooo---eee

Passion is loving

with no compromise.
Between man and woman the
only love that dies.

You can go home to mother
any time of night
but you can't come home to baby
and make it all right.

sock it to me baby
whoooo---eee

DEPARTURE

By Adrienne Wolfert

Flying Home

1.

Sometimes when that darkness
comes from the earth
and colors my eyes;
the moist, grave-like smell in my hair,
and I feel inertia in my veins,

I remember the tree
so heavy with blossoms
crisp to the tips,
its branches bent to the ground.

That May you died,
I stopped my car
stunned that I could
see this joy
without you. That beauty
could bring such pain.

Even in the blood-dark earth,
the sun can't penetrate,
roots will push up

and I feel the flesh of them,
the stirring delicate hairs
moving in earth
soft as water,
in the contained self nothing can warm,

and I remember they say that hair grows
in the grave,
when all else we have cherished
is returned to reflection,
when all we have been
is in the gestures of others.

Growing old is harder than any growing
but it's still growing
like the tree that in May has its moment
stunning the senses
and in winter returns to sleep
dreaming the stirring.

Does it know what it had?
What will be when the woodcutter comes?
Does it know how I stopped the car
absorbed it into me
like blood, like semen?

2.

I fly in a plane
from daylight to darkness
Time shifts its numbers.

Have I failed my time? We all
fail some expectations
of ourselves, or think we fail.
But those dreams have roots

That push up blind through the earth
where it is least fertile,
those roots are there in the dank, malodorous
earth, their growth breaking the surface
If only with one blade of grass,
or violet perhaps
too small
to distinguish.

I have no regret.
I am what I am,
what I came from.
I forgive myself for what I couldn't be.

I say it's not death
but dying that frightens,
a day begun too soon
and the night long away.
Once, the body moved
unaware of itself,
now it hears the alarm
of each small pain.
The clock's lost its numbers.

We fly over Philadelphia
where my daughter lives,
the strobes on the wing
speed a circle of light
over the river, the boats,
the banks and the city,
over the suburbs, through dark
windows, where a child's lids flutter
as the flash passes
where a man's dream reaches
for the body beside him,
where a woman sees
for the first time
a vision of her girlhood.

And I pray it's my blessing,
my small light falling

over those houses.
Bring them peace, those strangers.

In the cup of the flower
a drop of water shivers, stills,
the plant drinks what it needs,
of so many lifetimes,
so many seasons
that made me and through me, them---

a universe in the drop of water
in the rosy coccyx
of the fleshy flower.

How many loves---
My mother's, my own,
well up in my daughter.
Sharing, she gives me
life going on.
Dear Laurel, my hair
stirs the soil
my veins thicken
to branches spreading
under suns I'll not feel,
I'm heavy with blossoms.