Girls

learn at very young ages,
that outer beauty is the water—
oasis in this desert that they crave.

They smile in plaster of Paris,
hypocrites behind closed doors.
They cut themselves in secret, starve
for passion. Life of porcelain:

painted by day, gripped
by night. Wake up and dawn
their spaghetti-strap harnesses
leading their lives in chartreuse blinders.

Each young lady
feigning optimism
and poise, accepts her place
below you;

above the unsightly.
They learn to heave aside the weak,
to shun the strong -- not to trust
in a world of facades,
mascara
and hair spray.

St. Mary's

Hues of twilight
dripped across the canvas sky
until all you could see were stars like bleach stains,
a harsh streetlight,

and that woman,
huddled into herself,
teeth grating harsh on the flesh of her knees.
Fingers buried,
digging them into the earth
reaching them down
down,
rooting through the years
past the soil
the ice
the smooth slab of wood
like to cradle the head of her child.

And her eyes sewn shut
so she could rest on his negative, and the joke
of his black toothed-smile--
that gaping flash of bone
she'd known so well.

In that fractured night
she lit a candle
for no one to see
shining
like the silver on his bridle
that morning he said
it's okay, Ma.
It's okay, 'cause
you can be forever
dying when you're doing what you love.

Pretty Girl

has no idea
of just how bad I
want to climb

inside her skin and be
just like her, light
her soul with all that's good in me.

Girls want her bones,
her smile, her thighs, blue
berry eyes,

and in due time, I'll hurl aside
her blackened shades,
to prove that

life is Technicolor. She
snakes head-first
through a labyrinth crowd,

allowed to feel
like someone, then she slinks away,
a spidered crack, deep within the wall. And

she hides
her face behind black lines; she clutches
her soul in faux-leopard.

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Origami Poems Project

Beholder

By Linsey Jayne
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