

Western Suburbs and August '58

Evening in these suburbs
smelt of kerosene stoves
At night we lit kerosene lamps
watched their shadows
on the grey asbestos
Later my father lined the walls
with sheets of dark brown hardboard.

Before my father died
they'd had extensions built
His heavy black piano when they moved it
grooved the new pine flooring

Monday morning six o'clock in winter
streets still dark sharp breath
streetlights making little rings of frost
cold for my father

I remember that his body
underneath its white sheet
seemed rigid as plaster

I wondered what it would be like
living in a house where someone died

Rosemary Blake

for my father

Birthdays.
Weddings.

Because November rained
you took the photos later
in another season
when I felt like an imposter
in your summer garden
posing near the white
stone column
sharp in sunlight

and you'll never know
the poses that December

summer
shifting on the bright steps
of the stone church
still escaped me

I watched the stone walls
sharpen in hard light

the lined stone
cut
through every pose
the summers since your death

Rosemary Blake