

Now Beauty

Skin of drooping petals,
lips overrun with lipstick,
fleshless hands on the rail.
Her hips scrape in agony.
The name of her beauty
no longer exists.
I catch the old woman's wrist
and feel her blood near;
almost flowing over my hand.
I see her away
in the country of her youth.
She swings
giggling from a tree limb.
Her hair seems to grow
from the earth.
I stand beneath her
and try to catch her
by the waist.
Frustrated, I pull an apple
from her breast
and throw it into the cemetery
to satisfy death.
She lets herself fall.
I hold the old woman's wrist
too tightly.
She looks up
and her eyes
untwisted
take a step toward me.

ANDREW J. GROSSMAN