

They All Want

Rikki Santer

Some want me
to have a baby.
It's most logical.
I am 35.
I have a husband.
I own reservoirs of tender ways.

Most nights
a tiny, faceless mouth
sucks at me
gumming the small
of my back,
my elbows,
sometimes my breasts.
This mouth woos
with moist needs
but I know its teeth-
seductive jewels now
glistening in coral sea,
to grow later
sharp and selfish
hungry for my flesh, my salt
until I become famished for its.

These nights
miles away
my father's veiled eyes watch
over my slumber,
his damp eyelashes
fanning me with his longing
for the blessing that would;
these nights
my brother's wringing hands stir
a swelling melancholy
for his young daughter
and her lost link
which I will not forge.
And these nights
my husband's stubborn back
dank from confinement
whispers hazy misgivings
with each rising breath.

In the middle of nights I rise
to sleep under my bed.
The air is dispassionate there
just right
for a gambler with empty pockets.