

# Mimi

On Sunday mornings,  
    we woke to the rattlings of the rosary,  
as your spotted, once smooth skin  
    touched each bead,  
with each psalm,  
    I wondered how long  
    the cross would remain warm in your palm,  
that felt like crumpled velvet  
    caressing our small faces.

During afternoon's descent,  
    little bits of clothed aroma,  
flying from your peanut butter soup,  
    would beckon us to eat sticky substance;  
brother and I forced smiles and chanted,  
    "We like it, Grandma,"  
but spat it out with wrinkled, scrunched mouths  
    when your back was turned.

One day, the Phantoms appeared.  
You served them chamomile tea and chatted,  
answered by voices of the past we could not hear.

They took you away,  
    and we were left with dusty remnants:  
    - the photographs in your room, framing features,  
        frozen at a 1920's ball,  
    - the lingering, Lily-of-the Valley smell of you,  
        as if it, too, awaited your return,  
    - the knitted sweater, left half-completed

For many nights thereafter,  
    we struggled to feel your bedside hymns,  
comforting ones that once escorted us into dreamtime.

For many nights thereafter,  
    we convinced ourselves that  
what Mom said were the distant rattlings of the porch's wind chimes  
    were actually those of your rosary.