

I

The night wind dances
through my hair
an impatient suitor ruffling the courage
of a frightened wallflower.

I cringe at the caress,
pulling myself taut
with a sharp breath.

II

I was a river once;
the needy pastures drank their fill;
but there was no rain.
The thieving sun,
the greedy earth drank all.

The drought deepened;
my face began to crack.
Smiles dried up like
mudbanks in the sun.

The river stopped.

III

That night
alone
I could not
contain
The ceiling crushed my tears,
captured my cry.
*Music could not escape,
words were paralyzed.*
The stillness suffocated;
it was too loud.
Break out! Walls
of skin, too taut,
too human, too
stiff, to
sleep, to dream, to
escape, no
thing

But a blade
to kiss my veins.
Pain to clear my mind, to
cauterize.

IV

I awoke to white.
Is this death?
It is too pure, too painful.
Too silent.
Death should be loud,
striking a gong,
shouting a hoarse song,
tramping and stamping through the mud.

V

Music could caress.
A soft-throated recorder:
the smooth, unscarred wood
did not accuse.
A half-broken piano,
gentle with my fumbling;
a whispered song;
a prayer.

Glass was a mirror,
a photograph.
Brown, the earth;
green, the sea;
clear, the sky.
Blurred together by the
red edges of my memory; a
puzzle never complete.

Glass was a weapon,
a tool.
To rescue me from painlessness,
to carve patterns.

Then,
that room.
Low-ceiling, no windows, dark,
littered with the torn sheets of
last night's guest.

I sang to know I existed
but padded walls ate my song.

VI

Friends moved with
catsoft feet.
I was mended china to them,
which the slightest
touch
could shatter

But stubborn
as a diamond on glass.

VII

The night wind plays along my face,
the tender fingers of a
man in love.
I smile.
Soon it will be morning.

I feel life's weakness in
my veins;
its strength in
my backbone.
One snuff and darkness flares;
but a resist the parting of flame.

I watch the stars go down:
they blink – the sound of crickets.
The birds invite the sun to rise;
a breeze adjusts her veil of
leaves.
Does God hear?

I enter the house
where silence as a thief
steals away my pensive thoughts.

This is the day of the Lord.