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All Things Pretty

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All Things Pretty

Cover Page Footnote

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All Things Pretty

Linen napkins, lavender, with cocoa-kissed
crocheted cotten lace.
White organza party dress all chocolate-specked.
Black, patent-leather Mary-Jane's protect
white tights around my feet
at Gramma's house

A castle on the street where Mamma slept
in the front room, right
at the top of the stairs

Where the bureau drawer waits,
the one near the floor, for the might of my fingers
on the maple-drawer pull-
it opens to delight me with all things pretty

Like satin ribbons in colors-
like sunshine and periwinkle in yellow and blue;
like new-born grass, lightly green;
like frosting on cake, all frothy white;
like Gramma's cheeks, sweetly pink

When she tends and twirls these ribbons
into finely curled rosebuds and blooms,
prettier than any gardener could do,
on long green stems she plants them
on packages she brings to all her girls,

Boxes wrapped in tissue and paper,
satin ribbons and rosebud bows,
plucked from Mamma's maple
bureau drawer, where I sit

Pulling peach-colored lengths to
ribbon over my face in swirls,
wandering from ear to ear
to tickle and giggle myself till Mamma comes

And puts me to bed, her bed, of
feathers and seer-sucker sheets all white and cool
like when she was little and sat in the chair
by the bookcase in the corner

Where the chair is funny, all covered in
flowers and a seat that sticks out so far
towards a stool for feet, a good place to read
stories with Mamma while getting drowsy for sleep

Like I was with my thumb in my mouth while I
watched the chair and its silly seat and
it asked me to come so I did

And I curled on its seat and I watched the shelves
from the lights of the lamps down the drive at the street
that came into my room through glass that can break

Like the ballerina on the middle book shelf,
gracefully dancing in pink satin shoes
on toes, far below her tutu of lace that
Gramma made with her sister, too,

From watered-down clay where they dipped
real lace and gathered the flounce around the waist
of the ballerina on the middle book shelf,
letting it dry hard to paint it

Later while I watched and saw
Gramma's pink cheeks and happy
blue eyes that smiled at me
while I fell asleep.

-- *Betsy Lewis*