

WARM BEADS

Glenna Holloway

I slept too long. I'm late.
The strand of elliptical-cut jade
you gave me to go with my ball gown
wasn't in my jewel box. I searched
every drawer and pocket. In my shower
the shiny wall reflected
watercolor greens around my neck.
And more-- you had added
new beads and put them on me
while I was dragging dream feet
down another dark corridor
with too many doors and none of them mine.
Six new beads, carved like lilies,
bloomed between the familiar leaf shades.
Lavender, peach, white-- they glowed
against my skin all those hours I slept.

"Jade isn't always green," you said
of the original string presented in a case,
"but it's always cold--
unless the wearer loves."

I feel the heat stored in each bead
before entering the ballroom where you wait.