

holds onto the horn, wrestles it, shares it  
with devils and seraphs, wrests it away,  
triumphant sovereign-slave.

Feel the sound, mama? He's concentrating on all  
your edges now, honing, tuning, fining sharp, sharper,  
thin, thinner. Quivering on a sill to somewhere,  
retiring to a small glistening waver in a hair's spectrum,  
pulsing between green and turquoise, hanging  
on like dying gills.

He's a trumpet man, mama, more lives than a cat,  
more wind than a Kansas twister.

It's all the magic horn, mama, that  
glossy eternal alloy always suspended  
between you, even in bed,  
shaping you to it, branding you. That

gilded haloed concubine, caressed and polished, surrounded  
with plush. You, bleached, smacked, sewing a dress  
out of motel curtains, earning your M.A. in martyrdom. That

accused fetish, possessed, possessing. That icon  
he hocked once to buy you an emergency doctor in Detroit.  
You sold your mother's ring to get it back.

And the man, mama, with the hard harsh mouth,  
dead weight in the bus seat, little slivers of life  
scattered and telescoped into battered cases and collapsible  
stands. Trumpet man. Pitched all shades and sizes like  
shadows, worse for women than drummers.