

### ***Going to Texas***

A horse I never rode  
lives on a ranch I never owned,  
runs free through tall grasses  
I have never seen  
against a horizon that divides  
those who own acreage  
from those with only a shirt  
and a pair of shoes.

But I am flying to Texas  
to visit Aunt Elizabeth,  
who packed a toothbrush,  
underwear, and some pills  
before the levee broke, thinking  
there'd be something to go back to.

I go while she can still recognize me.  
She is my godmother, who held me  
in the sacristy over the font  
of God-love and family-waters,  
who, in my ninth summer,  
taught me to swim, ride a bike,  
feed the fish, wear Mardi Gras beads.

Now, she lives with her daughter  
in Houston. She passes the horses,  
glossy and wind-tossed,  
on her way to the drugstore  
for prescriptions she cannot afford.  
She returns to her own room,  
painted pink and cream,  
with a flowered bedspread,  
a view of the subdivision,  
and no past.

**Donna Pucciani**