

Piaf's Pockets

They put pockets in your dress
to hold your hands, the hands
that rode inside your lap.

You straddled the stage, feet braced
like a wrestler, head thrust
back, assaulted by applause,

our palms stinging with love.
Not five feet high but your voice
took off, rode the balcony,

scattered down to the pit
until we stilled and sat back
panting, but without that dress,

severe black shield, without
those pleated pockets, Piaf,
you could not have been borne.

Catherine Wiley