

## If I had a button ...

What remains is an empty pop can memory  
rolling around in the back of my four by four-head  
clattering every time I turn, stop or start again.

What remains is as empty as Grandma's eyes  
when I tell her that I decorate sets  
Ads for TV, like Pledge, I persist.

She asks what I do for a living every time I see her  
but as soon as I start explaining  
her eyes go blank and she interrupts me  
by taking my hand and telling me  
like she always does  
that she remembers  
when I was a little baby in the crib  
kicking my feet in the air.

Last Easter Sunday at family tea in Vandusen Garden  
Grandma told me that I am so grown up now  
that I look like a stranger to her

"Change of life", Grandma repeats to no one in particular  
and I wonder if she knows it sounds like she is talking about menopause

Then she tells me she is tired of living  
and that she wishes she had a button  
a button she could push to turn it all off  
and I wonder if she knows it sounds like  
she is talking about the worn out ones on the remote for her television

What remains is the dead quiet snow fall  
of nothing blossoms from a nearby cherry tree  
and my private reminiscence of the night before  
playing frisbee in the dark at the beach with my boyfriend, Venus  
was so bright she cast light on the water like a miniature moon  
Later we saw Saturn and Jupiter through a telescope at the Observatory  
and learned that the heliopause is the edge of the bubble of radiation  
that defines our solar system  
we learned that one of the first Voyager shuttles sent out thirty years ago  
has just reached it and has now begun beaming heliopause data back to earth

Nanny's hands are warm and dry  
and she holds mine against an ever-present kleenex  
She tells me she is one hundred  
My mom says she is actually only ninety seven.  
Only ninety seven, I am boggled  
and recall the observatory volunteer  
saying that the Voyagers *only* have a few decades of plutonium left.

## **If I had a button ...**

Apparently only is a relative concept for me today.

But the point I remind myself, is that we will soon lose contact  
and so, I pipe up and side with Granny on her age

Then after we have said everything twice  
and I have told her that she looks pretty in her cable knit turquoise sweater  
and flower shaped diamond earrings  
I have to pull my hand away because she won't let go.

"Ah life", she says and shifts uncomfortably in her seat.

What remains is an anxiousness  
about my own impatience and inability to hold hands with her  
till she runs out of plutonium  
or fades out of range.

What remains is a rattling pop can possibility  
that I will do nothing more in my life than just exist.

"Ah life..", Grandma says once again, "...if i had a button...".