

## the mother

Abortions will not let you forget.  
 You remember the children you got that you did not get,  
 The damp small pulps with a little or with no hair,  
 The singers and workers that never handled the air.  
 You will never neglect or beat 5  
 Them, or silence or buy with a sweet.  
 You will never wind up the sucking-thumb  
 Or scuttle off ghosts that come.  
 You will never leave them, controlling your luscious sigh,  
 Return for a snack of them, with gobbling mother-eye. 10

I have heard in the voices of the wind the voices of my dim  
 killed children.  
 I have contracted. I have eased  
 My dim dears at the breasts they could never suck.  
 I have said, Sweets, if I sinned, if I seized  
 Your luck 15  
 And your lives from your unfinished reach,  
 If I stole your births and your names,  
 Your straight baby tears and your games,  
 Your stilted or lovely loves, your tumults, your marriages, aches,  
 and your deaths,  
 If I poisoned the beginnings of your breaths, 20  
 Believe that even in my deliberateness I was not deliberate.  
 Though why should I whine,  
 Whine that the crime was other than mine?—  
 Since anyhow you are dead.  
 Or rather, or instead, 25  
 You were never made.

But that too, I am afraid,  
 Is faulty: oh, what shall I say, how is the truth to be said?  
 You were born, you had body, you died.  
 It is just that you never giggled or planned or cried. 30

Believe me, I loved you all.  
 Believe me, I knew you, though faintly, and I loved, I loved you  
 All.

1945

## a song in the front yard

I've stayed in the front yard all my life.  
 I want a peek at the back  
 Where it's rough and untended and hungry weed grows.  
 A girl gets sick of a rose.

I want to go in the back yard now 5  
 And maybe down the alley,