

# Who you pretended to be

by George L. Chieffet

## Who You Pretended To Be

*I only appeared to belong to my mother --Jane Kenyon*

I almost died when Ulysses sailed  
leaving behind the dowager queen  
complaining of processed sugar as Grandfather's limousine  
tooled to Saks to browse brassieres and under things  
and I slept on the jump seat with the engine idling  
one of a dozen flights of sheer indulgence  
department stores faded into carbon monoxide.  
Then a graceful turn with vasoline-- assisted living,  
Brazilian coffee for the lungs,  
cream and a petite convertible.  
A beach cabana cost thousands: the canopy's pastel  
reminded me of Joseph's coat. Golf clubs battered a canvas green,  
"No wider than our lawn," you sniffed. The patients saw vultures

on the oak finials though without husbands. Yours was rattled.  
He would bawl: *Those bronze bastards slowed their carts  
to watch your boobs.* They sprayed chalk over the ivy;  
they passed. Blackballed, you preferred umbrella shade  
to their rank cigars, a vegan diet when blood was thin  
a rich waistline that balked at meals  
a premium poolside porch screened in.  
You collected glass though nobody knew  
imagining you had bonds  
a diamond ring tucked in the sugar tin.

The *Cordoba* lobby was a lobby of confusion  
but transcendent as Lorca once wrote  
the distant city on the heights.

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Flower bouquets choked a cucumber suit.  
There was a halo to the orchid  
to the toque no one would dare  
a public appearance in botanical colors a Thanksgiving meal.  
You grieved in an Italian scarf and faintly stale corsage.  
To your son who chewed a carrot from a distance,  
*Take me home. I can't wait to get out of my shoes.*

