

Mister Handstand Man

I remember katydid-patrolled
evenings, when you strutted
up and down the driveway
on your hands. Your feet dusting
the slippers of the Seven Sisters as Venus
poured tallow across the western sky.

You could balance there forever,
pirouette, even improvise a kind
of flamenco dance, as you belted
out the lyrics from "Carmen."

I was proud that you could tap
the clouds with your heels,
proud that you could somersault
out of anything, landing gracefully
on Planet Suburbia again.

Who could have guessed
that you'd catapult out of West
Philly's university ghetto
only to land in upstate
New York? Who could have guessed
that you'd perform one last
handstand next to the tracks outside Elmira?

Did you press handprints
onto the soft grass? Fling your feet
skyward challenging those gravity-
bound stars? Did you yodel our special
yodel while hovering over the earth
as the train hammered toward you?

If so, why did
I hear nothing, nothing
not even the blackberry wind?

Doris Jean Lynch