

Pray for Me

Pray for me! – her fingers sharp as feathers' spines,
she clutched my hand. Her eyes were bare.
Of course, I replied, intending no more
than a gesture or two when the right time came
(her hands shook like birds in their delicate skin).
Pray for me . . . – I heard it again
as we raised our glasses to her eighty years.
I will, I said, and turned away.

It's been years now since we laid her down
(her eyes cut through me into the cold),
folded her hands, closed her lids,
nested her under a blanket of snow.

But I find she creeps in.
My nights aren't my own.
Her hands clutch mine, eyes open wide
if I try to sleep in an unpledged way.
I'm forced to pray
or her hands
and her bare, bare eyes
creep in.