

## Midnight in the Alzheimer's Suite

*Floyd Skloot*

Lost in the midnight stillness, my mother  
 rises to dress and begin another  
 chilly day. She crosses the moonlit floor.  
 There is too much silence beyond the door,  
 and a lack of good cheer, so she breaks  
 into song. But the coiling lyric snakes  
 back on itself and tangles in her throat.  
 She stops long enough to see a cloud float  
 along the hall, but somehow the cloud speaks  
 in the voice of the night nurse. Someone peeks  
 from a doorway. Now someone starts to moan,  
 someone else coughs and my mother's stray song  
 returns for a moment: *oh you belong*  
*to me!* If the audience would quiet  
 down, she would remember. Opening night,  
 that's what this must be, and the curtain parts,  
 and the spotlight is on, the music starts,  
 but there is too much movement, too much noise,  
 yet she cannot stop, must maintain her poise,  
 smile and keep on singing. Then it must be  
 over because the night nurse is there, she  
 embraces my mother and leads her back  
 offstage, whispering, bringing down the dark  
 again. Tired, but pleased with her last set,  
 my mother lies down for a well-earned rest.