

*lyn lifshin*

---

I GIVE UP BALLET

give up reading  
in the Rockies  
give up Imagination  
Celebration May  
with apple boughs  
rose dogwood exploding  
I'm waiting again  
waiting it out as I  
did, madly, for my  
husband to get over  
whatever it was  
that pulled him out  
of my rooms nights  
waiting for my  
period my pap test  
to come back or the  
phone that won't  
ring or for silence  
from the one that  
won't stop ringing  
I give up waiting  
for manuscripts  
to come back still  
homeless don't wait  
for the voice I held  
on my pillow to be  
on my pillow just  
on radio air I  
give up waiting  
for snow to shrivel  
for green to come  
back hardly notice  
lilacs maples going  
from spray to fingers  
I give up wondering  
if I'll ever have  
a life of my own  
give up or put on  
hold wondering  
which of us will  
survive the closeness  
no one else will want  
to know when my period  
starts when it's over  
will remember boys  
who brought or didn't  
bring yellow roses  
Chanel 5 or wore  
Clearasil for pimples

**Cornfield Review-30**

give up fearing my  
mother's mind might  
stop being clear  
or thinking of nursing  
homes my mother at  
89 lbs holds both  
sides of the wall  
sometimes pulls her  
self up stairs I  
give up thoughts of her  
going back to the apart  
ment I wondered since  
the 60's leaving  
Middlebury how I'd  
ever go back there  
with her not waiting  
at the living room  
window or always coming  
down the 27 steep stairs  
when I leave to tell  
me already crying she  
hates to let me go  
give up her this  
morning's plan of how  
we could escape  
my sister's rules and  
pills and bed time  
hours for a cottage  
on the sea give up  
thoughts of any 80th  
birthday party for her  
give up rage at her  
phone calls silver  
bullets hitting  
the heart of  
the bull's eye give  
up sureness she'd  
help me stand by me  
as she, barely able  
to stand alone  
gives up