

**mother-of-pearl- 1996***Karen Stoner*

In her white kitchen Grandma is  
spreading bread with butter and I  
reach out from my time to ask  
why she's untouchably in mine  
    her pearly hair mussed  
    her stockings rolled and banded  
    but we don't talk we just  
    pass from her porcelain room  
till her garden holds an abalone throne  
with lanterns casting iridescence on us  
and on its shell and alabaster walls while  
sudden nakedness is nothing as we  
buoy toward those gathered by a crystal cove  
    cooled by a waterfall whose wave  
    shapes a dancing shimmer and  
    my gaze goes down but  
    Grandma's calmly glistens back.