

THE GLASS HOUSE

Where should I cast my sorrow
If not here beneath these maple trees
At the lake's edge, with a wishing stone
The cold weight of my heart,
Wishing what has come might be undone?
In the glass house of dawn

Where shall I cast my cracked pebble:
At my own image rising from dry grass,
Purple loosestrife, asters and goldenrod,
Or beyond, where black water limns a cloud
Rainbow-winged, like a truant angel,
Or drowns the sparrow on the bough?

His song goes rippling on in trills
No lake can trace or echo.
Like the morning mirrored in the gloom,
The fallen world defies the world of grace.
Where shall I cast my stone
If not at the dark portrait of my face?

HOPE

In winter the crescent moon vanishes
So quickly in the blue, down the horizon,
Between the starry darkness and morning,

Like the hull of a ship without rigging
That I was meaning to load with wishes,
O not for me, my dear, wishes for you,

And you and you, my friends, all of us,
Such cargo as could only ride upon
The silver shell of that hallowed galleon.

I daydreamed, got bewildered by my muse,
Sun on the lace of frost, and fading Venus.
I looked up, and the reckless moon had gone.

HELEN

“Tell us a love story,”
Pleaded the class in chorus.
“Our lessons are all done,
Now don’t lecture or bore us,”

They prattled, except for one,
Helen, whose gaze looked lost
In the maze of willow branches,
The girl the boys liked most

For the faraway blue of her eyes
And brown hair straight as rain.
“Tell us a love story, please,”
They begged the teacher again.

He frowned and longed for the bell,
Saying, “All the love stories I know
End in heartache or death—”
Then Helen, from the back row

Called at last from her daydream
In the voice of an innocent lover,
“Tell us a love story anyway
And stop before it is over.”