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Masquerade

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Masquerade

by Margarete Cantrall

Beyond gray roofs
lace-rich catalpa
wears her bridal veil.
Late in the day
I cross the lawns,
finger her fragile lace,
inhale the perfume
of her flowers.

Suddenly, I see her feet.
They are dark, horn-hard and bare.
They overgrow cement by inches.
I know then her white
is not the web of youth.

In winter the rest of her
will match her feet.
She'll stretch arthritic hands to sky,
each bone of body visible,
stiff, unyielding,
with only enough give
to withstand wind.

I'll see her as she is:
old and twisted
but, oh so strong
and, strangely,
so very beautiful.

