About Quebec

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Illness has made a mockery
of your fine-boned face.
You pee in my presence,
needing my help with the faded
shapeless gown and the tangled
lines that trail
down your chest
like ropes of pearls.
I remember
country club dances, shimmying
little Black Dresses up our silky hips
to squat in discrete silence,
smoking in the girls' room,
patting the lacquered layers of our hair,
tingling with cocktails and compliments.

You never fail to tell the joke
about Quebec when my mock-French
confounded all the waiters.
You seem to disremember parts
about the train-trip when I stared
out the window, my teary face
a mirror of the rain.
We start to plan another trip-Alaska.
Like any storyteller, I choose my words with care
and some of what I say is truthful
and some the way I'm wanting it to be.