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Night with Stars

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Are you still ironing out my brothers and sisters?
Are they as smooth as they were?
I am white as a white paper sheet.
The nurse comes in here with her iron;
She plugs it in; she picks up my arm
And says the sleeves are the hardest,
The corners are hardest to get at.
You cannot imagine how I fear that triangle of flame.

When you work, do you still wear a kerchief
To keep the hair out of your eyes? The weather is fine.
I hope you will come and see how neat I am,
Folded and clean, like a handkerchief,
(Though nobody cries here)
All edges, all white edges.

Susan Fromberg Schaeffer

NIGHT WITH STARS

Now the day has rolled itself back
From the blank face of the sky
Flesh, white flesh,
Exposing the sockets of stars.

They are sucking the dreams
Out of skulls, the flesh-covered skulls
Creating a mist, a phosphorescence,
Spreading out finely, like sand.

The great hills funnel down the road
Black breasts outlined in silver,
The cold wet breaths of the dead.
The houses are tiny, and clumping together

Pathetic, like toes in the cold.
Little posts mark off their dominions
Palely, like slabs.
The sky is huge and boundariless.

The stars have no patience with littleness!
They have been through so much,
They are empty as halls
They are mindless as mouths, endlessly sucking,

The hills pull things in for them,
One at a time. They sort out the dreams,
The big ones, the little,
The trees offer them up,

Black obsessive Cassandras,
Gaunt, and serious, and in the service of gods.
The black river's silvery tongues
Keep on repeating their names, ominous,

Orion, the hunter, the dog star, the bear,
Black wind, black wind,
The sound
Of the great hungry patterns

Revolving their jaws.