

House Cleaning

by Frank X Walker

Needing to hear you sing against the quiet
I went straight to your apartment
put on your favorite songs, let the music open up
the patio doors, like you did before you swept.

You surprised me that day in the car
singing all the lyrics, blending your voice
with Ray's baritone, smiling all the way through
"nothing to do but roll around heaven all day."

How quickly I rejected seeing you shrouded
in the cerulean silk gown you danced in
at my wedding, just because the marriage failed.

Your daughters wrapped you in a new blue dress
hired a beautician to style your hair.
They wanted you to look pretty,
but I knew they were dressing an empty house

that you had stopped to visit, leaned over to quiet
your stormy ball of son, before stepping out, chin up
into a perfect evening sky.