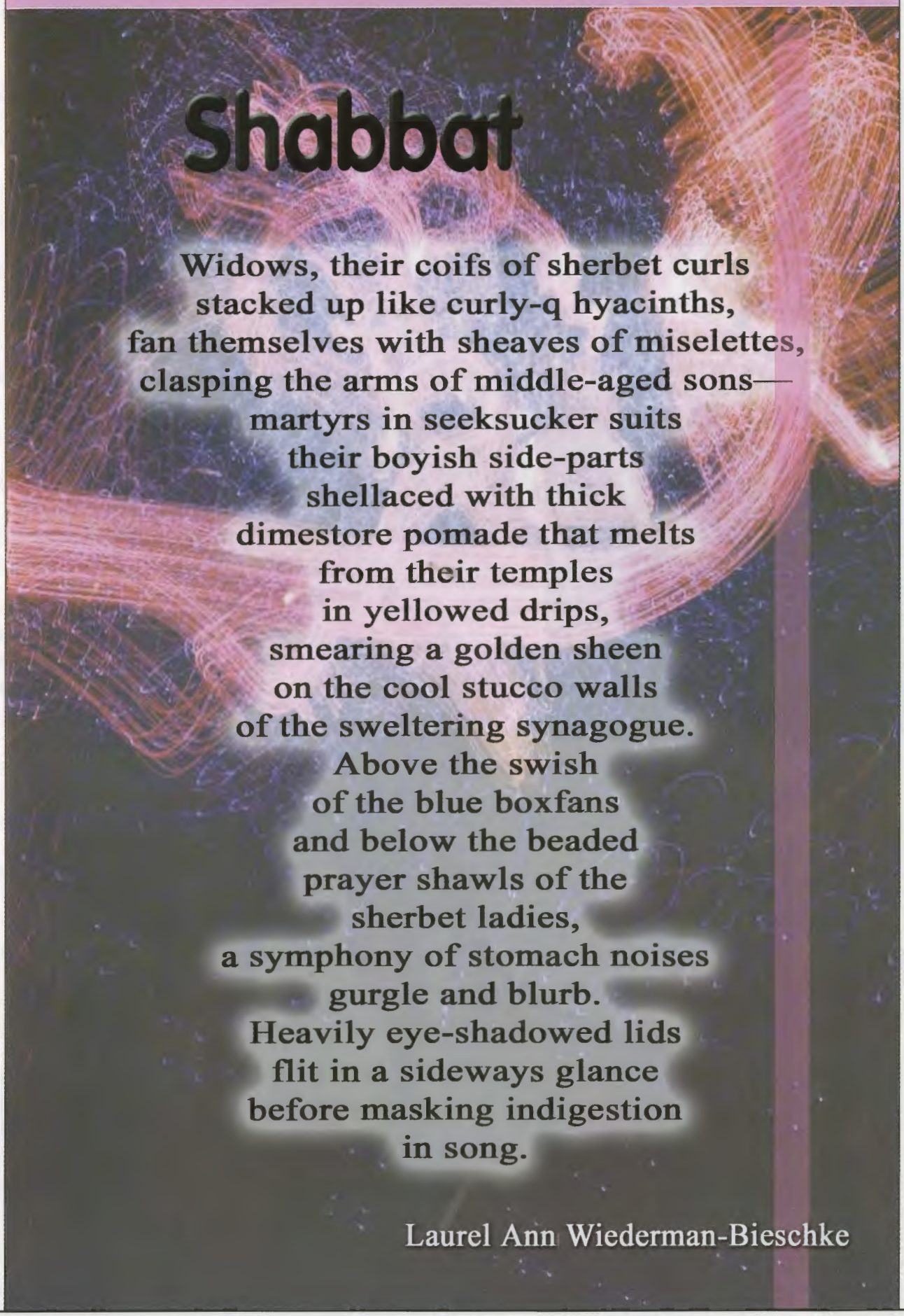

Shabbat

Widows, their coifs of sherbet curls
stacked up like curly-q hyacinths,
fan themselves with sheaves of miselettes,
clasping the arms of middle-aged sons—
martyrs in seeksucker suits
their boyish side-parts
shellaced with thick
dimestore pomade that melts
from their temples
in yellowed drips,
smearing a golden sheen
on the cool stucco walls
of the sweltering synagogue.
Above the swish
of the blue boxfans
and below the beaded
prayer shawls of the
sherbet ladies,
a symphony of stomach noises
gurgle and blurb.
Heavily eye-shadowed lids
flit in a sideways glance
before masking indigestion
in song.

Laurel Ann Wiederman-Bieschke

Shabbat