

Two Poems

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Manhattan Love Stories: From the Millenium (excerpt)

4. Travel Permission

A day off from my prep school's hard to get--
 All girls, taught mostly by females, most smart
 Yet raised to be fulfilled with love, with friends,
 To scant Milton and history for the heart.
 The handbook lists our phone numbers; the girls
 May call us anytime. And do. (We worry
 When they don't.) A substitute's long-scheduled;
 I type instructions for the VCR,
 An intro for the Sylvia Plath tape,
 Tidy my desk. Hours before the plane takes off
 The phone rings, and a mom stutters my name:
 Her child's been gone all week, but swastikas
 Drawn on her locker were the cause, not flu.
 Her best theme, on Anne Frank, misspelled Dachau.

Home Thoughts from Abroad (excerpt)

6. Jackson Boulevard 1972 and Fitzroy Road 1963

Both houses white, both haunted by Furies
 Who took their revenge as good women do,
 Not with guns or knives but black depressions,
 One's hair falling lankly from an oven door
 As hissing gas choked out her eulogy;
 The other crying in bed through whole seasons,
 Wearing the same nightgown as summer air
 Sharpens into fall, as I learn Shakespeare
 And history, also how to clean a house,
 Make dinners for my brother and my father,
 When he's not travelling; how to wash
 And iron between problems for geometry.
 My favorite book in high school? *The Bell Jar*.
 Recurring nightmare? Sheets stained, her wrists slashed.



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