

I used to write

when the lump in my throat hurt so much  
it splattered ink all over paper.  
I haven't written for a long time  
but suddenly life seems summed up  
and my throat aches,  
it aches.

I am one of the women you haven't read about before.  
We never speak our insides out.  
(We have too much to lose, or think we do.)  
But you'll be reading all the stories, anyhow,  
in one newspaper or another,  
over coffee.

For the silent women are clamoring to be heard,  
though you've never seen a single, printed word.

Full Plumage

Womanliness flows from her pores,  
from the curve of her elbow where babies slept,  
from the swell of her groin where hungry men urge her on,  
from areolas tipping mounds of powdered breasts.

Perfume rises out of her  
in waves from a secret spring,  
scenting the air when she appears,  
trailing its aroma when she leaves.

They have called her beautiful  
and made her beautiful because of it.  
She is careless with her caresses.  
All those she encounters feel the surge of her love.

She is an enchantress who charms -  
the wary and afraid -  
even the wise and disillusioned -  
with a magnetic force none can resist.

Her almond-shaped eyes see into the future,  
her slim fingers turn pages of the past,  
but she lives in the present  
with gratitude for all her gifts.

She has fulfilled the promise of girlhood,  
the requirements of motherhood,  
the tests of marriage, divorce, and life alone.  
In what might be called her elder years,  
she's achieved full plumage.