

# Grandma's Purse

*Doug Lawrence*

Grandma's purse opens like an aged oyster.  
Barnacles crack, the silica huffs  
a heavy cloud from the crusty shell,  
settling on the night stand  
catching stray fingerprints in the sand.

The room lays awake with eyes closed.  
A hand glances quickly inside the purse,  
furtive little digits gather coins  
from the bottom. The furnace pops,  
Billy reels, the moon buzzes loud  
through the window. Curtains hiss,  
the cold hairs on his arm fall in  
line and bristle at attention.

Billy's grip loosens and the hand is lost  
among sharp pencils, safety pins,  
laughing photo faces. The mirrors loom  
and crowd the room like dark bubbles:  
fifty wide-eyed lenses showing  
a hundred gnawing jaws gulping two hundred  
fifty fingers that drop one shiny coin apiece.  
The throw rug slithers along the hardwood floor.

Billy slips to his knees with a thud.  
Grandma stirs, smacks her lips, turns over, snores.  
Billy's arm feels like a dry tongue.  
He yanks it free and skates away on his socks.  
The knob gives him a shock as he leaves.