

Twenty years after

Marlene Pearson

the ball where she won the prince's heart,
her feet still small as a china doll's,
things were no longer a children's tale
with pumpkin coach and miraculous
mice transformed to white mares.
Twenty years after, she walked the shadowed halls
sipping white wine

while the prince—that eternal romantic, that spoiled son,
ran back to daddy's place at the palace
carrying his catalogue, begging daddy
to order him another glass slipper.
Surely it would bring him a new lovely young lady,
one without saggy breasts, as Cindy had once been.

But Cinderella had grown up in ashes
and knew love's burn,
how dreams shatter like dropped crystal.
Even fairy godmother had died years ago.
And though she sweep and clean
and sing like a swallow,
old prince charming would not be wise as myth.

He was not content with her pure heart
and mortal love. He was no wizard.
He could not wipe the crow's feet from his own eyes
and his feet ached after a day at the courtyard.
Yet he clutched his dreams
like the drink she poured him when he came home,
gulping it down.

He would have 3 or 4 more before he could face sleep.
She knew he had no more power than a mouse.
He was only a middle-aged man.