

Something about you

I find some miniature roses for you,
deep rose, and for me, they are you,
they are the climbing roses you grew
on the chimney of that house
where we all lived, our family and
only our family, because they tore it down
after you had left it. The roses are you,
they are the deep rose lipstick
you always wore, I seem to recall,
when I was young enough it was a treat
to be allowed to fetch something
from your purse. Get a cough drop,
get a kleenex, maybe, and that soft folded
paper smelled like your lipstick, smelled
like you. A grown-up woman,
a Mother, a dark-haired mystery
woman I had known all my life
and had never known, still do not.
But you are, aren't you,
those deep magenta roses,
you are a purse full of things
I will never be and will never
be able to gather up in my memory
before they all spill away,
beyond reach. You are not me,
my mother and my brothers'
and my sister's mother. You are
deep and you are folded up
and you are open at the corners,
Isabelle of the
roses.