

# *Glass Box*

Nichelle Taylor

She is a scrapbook, photographs cut and pasted out of order,  
her corpse redressed in childlike lace  
she will wear to the grave with a painted smile  
to mask the last pieces of youth slowly chipping away.

She is a glass box, almost invisible—almost invincible  
to the bullies turned scorching bullets,  
to inches of unfamiliar skin hanging from broken bones,  
to nights suicide knocked on her door.

She is four cracked walls held sturdy by lies  
that she still trusts God with her life,  
barricades herself deeper into her own chest so she can be lost  
to the world that won't stop spinning, the heart that won't stop beating.

But she is only a glass box, a scar-lined coffin  
in my past, a time-capsule of expired childhood,  
the part of me I try to hold between shaky hands  
until she shatters.