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**SUSAN LUCINDA HELWIG**

**Overcoats: hers and hers**

My mother
a stone
who wanted me for a mountain

We sit in overcoats
she asks how I feel, about her dying
nothing is what I feel
but where to hide?

First I blame her coat
she must take it off
set an example
show me what's inside

When she doesn’t budge
I get up and set our table
with platitudes, knives

“ I can’t believe...”
“ remember the time...”
“ You know, Dad never really...”

Ah, ma petit chou!
You hoped to grow an elm when you had me
but too soon used, too much bent
down from heights that we forgot
we both were reaching for.

Susan Helwig’s work has been published or broadcast in various venues, most recently Hart House Review 2003 and The Common Sky. Her first collection of poetry, Catch the Sweet, was published by Seraphim Editions in 2001.