

## MARY AITKEN

### Blue Notes

Like a blue note, like any jazzy improvisation, you slipped between the conventional notes of my life.

Like a blue note, you had no easy interpretation, no casual explanation, you were grand, adding subtle overtones not easily identified.

Like a blue note, you spoke to my soul somewhere in the ether where music balances between the player and the listener. You sounded in those spaces that exist between heartbeats and between breaths. You resonated deep and lively and strong.

Like a blue note, you still are here in this space in this time in this existence now wherever a musician offers to play you will be there, sounding your blue note. As always.

—In memory of Alan Roy Galbraith  
Ritchie

*Mary Aitken is 65 years old and the recent developer of a web site entitled Women-praying-for-peace.org. She wrote "Blue Notes" in memoriam for a very dear family friend, Alan Roy Galbraith Ritchie who died far too young.*

## KATHY ASHBY

### For the Second Time

the mother yells  
one of her daily drudged-up duteous drawls  
rehearsed since some sixties' show.  
With her head tilted up towards the stairs  
her voice cracks on the "school" part of  
"Hurry up Pumpkin you'll be late for"  
"Schooooooool" mocks the older son,  
her dropout.  
Then he hides a smirk behind a bite of  
buttery toast  
knowing indifference will bounce back her  
glare  
which will then fall on the daughter, the  
one without a shell.  
She imagines her mother sees the loss of  
virginity  
in the sore at the raw corner of her mouth.  
Not until elbows liquefy and melt off the  
edge of the table  
does she sense her gaze move off her case.  
Taking a distant look she momentarily dips  
into her mother's space,  
imagines, feels and subconsciously  
imprints herself  
with future pain.  
She watches how repeatedly rinsed and  
squeezed under wrinkled hands  
the kitchen cloth sweeps clean  
earnest expectations  
like those recurring crumbs left on the  
counter.

*Kathy Ashby is an award-winning hot glass artist since the early 1970's, who now lives and works in the wilderness of Muskoka, Ontario with her husband and son. She has been extensively published, notably as a guest Columnist in the Toronto Star Arts Section.*