

*Francis Coke*

## MY GRAMMA CLEO



At dawn she smelled of Idlewild,  
of sea-salt air, steaming morning mint,  
La India hair oil and Limacol spilled  
on a four-poster home of young dreams.

I knew her in warm, secret places --  
a nook in the curve of her arm,  
old houses that doubled as church -  
where pain was eased with blue teacups  
and home was her brushed away hurt.

I watched her chase flickering fireflies  
As night breeze played in her hair,  
and love was the depth in her eyes.  
Some nights she smelled of dry pages,  
of faraway places yellowed with age,  
of Sunday school songs his spent fingers urged  
from a piano listlessly dying.

Lately she lives in a place beyond loss  
where barren walls echo her footfalls;  
she crosses old paths with a stranger's feet  
and longs for the balm of dusk lilies.