

# Across the Street

By Austin Segrest

I ran across the street, I didn't know any better.  
Ran out in the street, I didn't know no better.  
I just knew a woman was there, though I'd never met her.

She sat me in her parlor, distracted me with trinkets,  
milky glass birds and fish, distracting trinkets.  
She said my mother would be fine, but did she think it?

The world was a blur of crystal wings and fins.  
My tears were casked in crystal, wings and fins.  
She was the first of many lady-friends.

The tree shadows shortened, she brought me a drink of water.  
Morning matured, she brought me a glass of water.  
I drank it so fast, she went and brought another.

I kept looking out the window, she didn't ask me what for.  
I watched out that window, she didn't ask what for.  
The seconds broke off and lay there on the floor.

I imagined my mother's route, as far as I could.  
Her long morning walk, followed as far as I could.  
Nothing I could do would do any good.

Suffer the little children, and forbid them not.  
Christ said suffer the little children, and forbid them not.  
Said love thy neighbor, sometimes she's all you got.

Source: *Poetry* (May 2019)