

Ashes of Violet

One day I go with them, dumping our school ties and sailing off
to Liverpool. High on the top deck of the ferry, heart
scudding between the grey Mersey river and skies, I face into
cold wind with new friends on each side.

In the big store, I learn to lift lippy, paint my nails bright blue,
glide around in the dream of gold high-heeled shoes,
and on our dizzy upturned wrists, we splash white satin,
tiger rose, ashes of violet, xanadu.

Parading the posh dresses, they heckle and stir; they cheer dull
brown cardigans and baggy beige underwear;
they chat up shop dummies, finger the pearls, strut about
in pink hats and four letter words.

Under challenge, they take off, yet refuse to back down, and
watching them give cheek, sparking wit as they fly, I fall
in love with the breathtaking flair
of these regal girls, their wings, their rough tongues.

Heading back to the docks, we clown around the music shops,
singing today's songs, and along indifferent streets
we dance the twist, for laughs, a gang of fooling girls who know
for sure they're going places.

Here we are, forever dancing down byways, scoring this
footnote, breaking out of time, calling to each other.

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Sandy Fitts

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