

## Mirror Mirror

My raised chin as I inspect my throat –  
a nightly habit – seems to snub hope.  
The proffered skin talks loosely of its age:  
not young, not so very old.

You walk in then, rosy with sleep, as my fingers  
prod at fading elasticity, as my eyes,  
with no pulse of expression,  
count wrinkles.

You stand there, hesitant,  
in so much of your candour  
and so little of your nightgown,  
closing the door behind you. As ever  
your unblemished beauty affronts.

You have intruded. If I shook you,  
you wouldn't cry – you'd gaze at me  
and wonder what you might do to ease my pain.  
Were I to shout it would be the same,

so I calm the stricter impulse,  
sit down and call you over.  
Close to your youth I have to fight

for equilibrium,  
to present the face you need,  
to deck my words with the expected warmth.

“What are you doing still awake, dear?”

Pretty eyes widen, catching candlelight,  
their white, their blue, their black  
all innocence. “Oh, you know how much I love

“to be with you.” You press a playful finger  
into the soft of my arm. Little doll,  
little doll, snug by the mirror with me,  
how shall I suspect you of complicity?