

## Bang Baby Bus

I was sitting on the Big Blue Bus,  
my nose flesh deep in one of Barker's  
*Books of Blood*. My cheeks flushed,  
waiting for some warm-eyed demon,  
some handsome devil, to crawl out  
of paper and ink and wrap his bones  
around me

like the couple ready to fuck,  
sitting across from me. His hand  
wound tightly around her knee, rubbing  
her through the worn place in her jeans.  
The first act of one of those bang bus  
 pornos where we bus folk would just  
look on with disgust, with secret envy.

They got off at the next stop, letting in  
a cool breeze, when an old hag  
waddled her way to the seat next to me.  
She smelt of mothballs and armpits.  
Great silver hairs leaped from her cheeks.  
And prayed to my God of Mean  
that the puddle beneath her was not pee.

Her skin as thin as a crumbled  
page. Easily torn, peeled back,  
like a real *Book of Blood*, my mind  
turned, as I stroked my soft cheek  
and tried to ignore this possible future,  
rotting in front of me. But she muttered  
hot secret things to her imaginary lover  
and stuck her fleshy paws into her purse,  
where they rummaged through used  
tissue paper, old receipts, bread crumbs,  
her disease --

She had a tiny plastic baby --  
a trinket you would find in a plastic  
egg. A quarter worth of happiness.  
Cracked open like how I imagined  
her skull beneath my feet. Hatched  
like a little God. An alternative dimension --

to riding on buses and sleeping alone  
and waiting all night for a call on my  
dysfunctional cellular phone.

She stroked the baby, the way he stroked  
her leg. Her eyes full of love, not aware  
that plastic is just another word for dead --

She prattled to it and cooed, the way mothers  
do and I realized, I realized that she just knew  
that happiness only comes in quantities for a  
very, very few.