

## Deathbed

I stole the violin at Carnegie Hall.  
Upward through an hourglass my soul pools.  
My mother made me practice religiously

the art of concealing in my coat  
an empty case, befriending the owner of  
the violin. From Carnegie Hall I stole

away—violin in coat—while he smoked,  
then returned backstage to feign the disbelief  
my mother made me practice. Religiously,

I'd play in our small kitchen, but never—  
she hissed from the cracks of her lips—  
at Carnegie Hall. The violin I stole

clenches music in a fist it can't release.  
Look behind the silk lining. Come closer.  
My mother made me practice religiously

the music of silence I now betray.  
I stole the violin at Carnegie Hall.  
Mother made me. I'm an empty case  
awaiting an empty case. O, Lord.

This work originally appeared in *Willow Springs*, and is protected by copyright, controlled usually by the original author, and in all other cases by *Willow Springs*. U.S. and international copyright laws apply and you may not reproduce this content without written permission from the author.

© 2006 Willow Springs

ISSN 0739-1277