

**Midnight Sweetness**  
**by Ginny Foster**  
**Providence Elderplace Glendoveer**

Mother Joseph rings the after-hours bell

cha ching cha ching

returning at midnight from a begging trip  
asking the storeowners and the bankers

oranges for the poor  
oranges for the poor

cha ching cha ching

her black habit  
frames her plain, unappealing face  
as she waits for the smallest sister  
to rouse and let her in

she goes out to shake the orange tree  
in the courtyard

oranges for the poor  
oranges for the poor

the smells of the midnight orange  
Mother Joseph  
hungry after her journey  
breaks it open

peeling it in the moonlight  
the gleam of the white pith  
the juice dribbling down  
her humble chin where three hairs grow

At Glendoveer I get an orange  
from the bowl

oranges for the poor  
oranges for the poor

number 2 grade oranges  
refused by grocery stores  
with scars  
soft spots  
strange brown islands

we old people have our own  
bruises from falls  
freckles  
our skin stained like the skin of oranges

it's midnight  
and juice dribbles down my chin

white fiber lines the orange white hair outlines  
my face

a touch of acid  
but we are sweet inside

the aides  
they wait for us to get by  
leaning on our walkers  
as they hurry to  
bring the clinking cart of  
metal oxygen tanks

cha ching cha ching

they see us when our teeth  
are in a jar

our flabby bodies in the shower

we too are not perfect  
but still they care for us

I love the aides  
I love Larry's garden  
but most of all, I love the oranges.

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