

24  
boxes in 2 horizontal rows  
of 12

each bisected  
by a 1/4"  
line

Step back and watch it glow  
like amber

as if a great wall of scrolls  
were touched by burnt  
rain;

even the shallows unreadable

Dead at 34 was Eva Hesse

— Thomas Avena

San Francisco CA

#### A MOTHER'S DAY

My child brings me  
tiny packages covered  
with wrapping paper  
he painted only moments before,

as I try to convince my own mother  
that it's all right to take back  
the robe and slippers without  
hurting my feelings.

My husband makes his annual claim  
that I'm not his mother,  
exempting him  
from cards and gifts.

We spend most of the day and night  
trying to get through  
the circuit lines to Buffalo  
to wish his mother a happy day.  
By ten-thirty we get through  
and make all the necessary small talk  
that gets my husband yawning  
and ready for bed.

Later, after the house is quiet  
and I retire to bed with a book,  
he pounces upon me,  
as if the thing between his legs  
were worth a dozen yellow roses.

#### CHOP SUEY

My idea of a drink  
isn't liquor over fruit salad  
with an umbrella,  
but I sip it anyway  
waiting for the waitress to bring  
my dinner.

Fuscia and emerald dragon lanterns  
are strung around the door leading  
to the kitchen,  
while an oriental girl  
with little or no breasts  
leans against it.

When my dinner comes  
I try a little pork fried rice  
set before me in the colorful bowl,  
but I can't take my eyes  
off that girl under the lanterns.

Embroidered with satin multicolored threads,  
her gaudy blouse and trousers  
hang loosely over her narrow frame.  
She lines her slanted eyes  
over and over again  
with black shadow.

The shiny-haired beauty  
would rather be wearing  
real people's clothes,  
but she gives the customers  
what they want.

— Nancy Avdoian

Fairview Heights IL