

you gave us a hundred others.

and after everyone saw what
you gave us
and used it up
you went and died in a hotel
room on Hollywood Blvd.

alone.

STYLE

my father's passion
was the opera.
he went to the Seattle
Opera and always looked
the part of
"Mr. Opening Night."

he was dressed
in a black velvet
jacket and slacks; an
18th Century styled
white shirt with ruffles;
hand-made Latvian jewelry
— silver brooch
by his neck and silver
rings with spangles
on his fingers —
and opera glasses
in hand.

with grey, wavy hair
(parted in the middle)
and a small moustache
— my father had an
abundance
of old world,
European style.

the big money
— old and new,
man or woman —
looked like they
dressed from a
department store
compared to
my father.

the press photographers
knew it too.

the next day,
the only photograph
in the paper would be:

"Uga Alberts, Latvian-
born painter and architect,
at the opening night
of 'La Traviata....'"

at the opera
my father
was in the paper
more than
the mayor.

— Ulvis Alberts

Belfair WA

DANDELIONS

"Don't call any more, it's killing me," she screams,
and slams her front door in his face.
He tells himself it was too good to last, drives
twice around her block, then home.
He hugs his wife, finds the dandelion-digger in
his garage, and kneels on his brown lawn
Beside green dandelions still growing strong despite
three mowings in four weeks.

His digger has a wooden handle and steel blade forked
like a stick for pinning snakes.
He drives it in beside a dandelion, thinking of hot
sheets; cool, slippery showers afterwards.
He loved dandelions as a boy, their yellow suns
changing into white space helmets
Made of seeds which, one by one, would float away
like planets in the solar wind.

He feels around for the tap root, branching like
cancer, sucking life from decomposing stone.
Simply watching her breasts emerge, soft sculptures,
from her bra's cloth mold,
Could pull him out of the tar pit into which marriage
and job were sucking him.
"You know you're grown up when your life feels like
a soap opera," she said.

In his hand — gloved against the dandelion's
protective spines — its fibery stalk