

## “Chocolates”

My mother taught me how to prize them:  
on the couch, my father gone to bed,  
watching Audrey Hepburn, Deborah Kerr  
choose among suitors, decide what to wear.  
We'd allocate and savor: marzipan and Cointreau,  
mocha truffle and praline, soft  
cinnamon cream covered with crisp dark crunch.

I learned to discriminate sweet  
sludge, generic, from the known and European:  
Rumpelmayer, Neuhaus, Lindt, Perugina.  
Later, too old for easy endings,  
we'd demand more than our share,  
sting each other to tears,  
mouths closed as though we'd swallowed bees.

Like cuckoo clocks and racing cars  
chocolates require precision,  
but like capers or caviar  
they must be consumed before they bloom  
or break. And then they dissolve  
to nothing on the tongue, like names  
called out in anger, and in love.