

A String of Pearls by Sue Turner

As a young girl she stares
At the silver screen
The cigarette holder in a gloved hand
Smoke blown in a haze
Covering slowly blinked eyelids
An off-the-shoulder black evening dress
Seated at a table
With an empty glass
Her beau pours another
Around her neck a string of pearls.
Her seventh birthday party
Mum's knitted yellow twinset
Dark brown buttoned up skirt
Behind her the sounds of her friends
She steps into the sunlit garden
Feeling twenty-one
Around her neck a string of pearls.

The forbidden place
Her parents' bedroom
A drawer quietly opened
The pale grey oblong box
The awkward clasp
Opened in fear
Before her the oyster's gift
In satin lining
A string of pearls.

The night he tells her he loves her
A gift tied with ribbon
In a plush black box, excitement rising
And lying in wait
Was a string of pearls

A love of black needs balance
Needs white to light the face
As years pass by they're needed more
That string of pearls.

Now old and aching
Grey hair that was once black
Glasses cracked and eyes rheumy
She peers through the grime
On the Charity Shop window
At the one that prompts all the memories
A string of pearls.

Strangely enough she never really liked pearls.