

PAULINA'S PLACE

She's collected these things for years,
exquisite delicate things.
You can see the decorator touch
beyond her warped door: here a swag of mist,
there a shimmer of draped sea foam.
Silk frost swatches patch the peeling corners.

Paulina's words aren't always plain
but when she makes pictures, when delight
invents her smile, her meaning shines.
She lifts her wilted right arm with the left
and holds her hand on her heart to convey
contentment. She laughs like a door chime.

She gathers her clingy cloudlike stuff
in cardboard cut-out frames, sprays on colors
through her stencils, and calls
the finished paintings seines for catching
scenes of summer afternoons.
When friends don't understand, she prints

it out-- how some hold the spectrum's stripes,
and those outside are beaded purses in the rain,
and on the porch they're fairy awnings.
After she won state fair prizes for her work,
people traded words like "weird" and "nut case"
for "unique," "creative," and "artiste."

Kids don't call her Spider Woman anymore,
or her treasures nasty cobwebs. They walk
the woods with Paulina, help her find
her lace mantillas of moonlight,
conversation pieces filled with shed petals
and pastel hope-- the shoring for her dreams.