

This next one is called “A Dream of Glass Bangles”, in India there is a custom, a hindu custom, where a woman learns she has become a widow, she is supposed to break these bangles she’s wearing, these glass bangles, and then she doesn’t wear the bangles ever again and that marks her widowhood. So “Dream of Glass Bangles”.

Those autumns my parents slept
warm in a quilt studded
with pieces of mirrors

On my mother's arms were bangles
like waves of frozen rivers
and at night

after the prayers
as she went down to her room
I heard the faint sound of ice

breaking on the staircase
breaking years later
into winter

our house surrounded by men
pulling icicles for torches
off the roofs

rubbing them on the walls
till the cement's darkening red
set the tips of water on fire

the air a quicksand of snow
as my father stepped out
and my mother

inside the burning house
a widow smashing the rivers
on her arms