

Joan Hoekstra

Margaret Mitchell's Daughters

sing a song of eden
a pocket full of pain
four and twenty women
waiting in the rain
will the sky be opened?
not by fate or fame
adam, wearing just his skin,
intends to win the game

we sit in coffee shops
stirring our stories
but only the sugar bowl hears

we agree we didn't give a damn
our Ashleys were likable bastards
but "from this day forward" was boring

our glances scan
behind each other's shoulders
still seeking the possible Rhett

sisters circa 1950
a generation of clones
don't shake your heads
Scarlett syndromes is skin
deep and terminal

we are Margaret Mitchell's daughters

sing a song of buddha
a legacy of hope
four and twenty daughters
listen to the pope
six and forty daughters
listen to the ad
isn't she a dainty dish
to market as a fad

Yeah, wouldn't I have liked
to look like her.
But she was too skinny.
Twiggy was way out. A free wheeler.
To hell with convention.
Mini-skirt and striped stockings.
You know. And those big eyes.

That was her thing. Expression.
Movement. She could say no
and never do it.

Not like me. I would say no
and end up giving in anyway.
Even now, I still give in.

She was about fun. I admired her,
even though her life wasn't fun.
Always having to do what she was told.

I starved myself to be like her.
Drank nothing but water.
I even stopped menstruating
for a whole year
but I never got below 115 pounds.

sing a song of promises
a heart hung on a chain
four and twenty women
waiting for the train
the preacher holds his belly
laughing all the while
this railroad ran to nowhere
perhaps it was an aisle

I practised being significant
while listening to Leonard Cohen
You know the routine
signed up for yet another course
studied to become someone
mastered in recycled guilt
earned a phd in nice

I did this all while waiting
for the right
day for a good enough reason
for hallowed blessing
for perfect permission
to quit

sing a song of legends
the history of lies
four and twenty pipe dreams
puffing up the skies
for cinderella wonderfella
ballads make a bed
behind a gate of ivory
and mainly in the head