**"The Disquieting Muses" Sylvia Plath (1957)**

Mother, mother, what illbred aunt

Or what disfigured and unsightly

Cousin did you so unwisely keep

Unasked to my christening, that she

Sent these ladies in her stead

With heads like darning-eggs to nod

And nod and nod at foot and head

And at the left side of my crib?

Mother, who made to order stories

Of Mixie Blackshort the heroic bear,

Mother, whose witches always, always,

Got baked into gingerbread, I wonder

Whether you saw them, whether you said

Words to rid me of those three ladies

Nodding by night around my bed,

Mouthless, eyeless, with stitched bald head.

In the hurricane, when father's twelve

Study windows bellied in

Like bubbles about to break, you fed

My brother and me cookies and Ovaltine

And helped the two of us to choir:

"Thor is angry: boom boom boom!

Thor is angry: we don't care!"

But those ladies broke the panes.

When on tiptoe the schoolgirls danced,

Blinking flashlights like fireflies

And singing the glowworm song, I could

Not lift a foot in the twinkle-dress

But, heavy-footed, stood aside

In the shadow cast by my dismal-headed

Godmothers, and you cried and cried:

And the shadow stretched, the lights went out.

Mother, you sent me to piano lessons

And praised my arabesques and trills

Although each teacher found my touch

Oddly wooden in spite of scales

And the hours of practicing, my ear

Tone-deaf and yes, unteachable.

I learned, I learned, I learned elsewhere,

From muses unhired by you, dear mother,

I woke one day to see you, mother,

Floating above me in bluest air

On a green balloon bright with a million

Flowers and bluebirds that never were

Never, never, found anywhere.

But the little planet bobbed away

Like a soap-bubble as you called: Come here!

And I faced my traveling companions.

Day now, night now, at head, side, feet,

They stand their vigil in gowns of stone,

Faces blank as the day I was born,

Their shadows long in the setting sun

That never brightens or goes down.

And this is the kingdom you bore me to,

Mother, mother. But no frown of mine

Will betray the company I keep.

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***The Disquieting Muses* (1916) Giorgio de Chirico**

