

**THE LILAC GLOVE (published in *Rock Salt Anthology*, Mother Tongue Press 2008)  
By Linda Rogers**

You gave me the dead woman's  
lilac glove; and the first thing I  
thought about was the biology  
teacher who told us how men and  
women fit one another perfectly.  
*Like a hand in a glove*, he said.  
A month earlier you'd been sitting  
on a Mexican beach, watching all  
those beautiful men play in the surf;  
both of you filled with a longing  
for love in a warmer climate.

While the mariachi band rested  
in the shade, you and the dead lady  
may have heard snow falling on  
the beach, the dead pianist traveling  
south on a melting ice floe, playing  
*The Goldberg Variations* on the  
teeth of a nearly extinct species.

We all could see the dead lady was  
enthralled with you. What is it with  
people who chase impossible dreams  
the way they also pursue summer  
from one cold latitude to the next?

Our biology teacher said that desire  
was a holy sacrament. The old lady  
had a husband who made a child  
with her the stormy night she'd filled  
their room with lilacs as fragrant as  
skirts worn by girls who dance in the  
wind wearing nothing else. In China  
they say the hand retains the scent of  
a flower offered in love. This memento  
does not belong to me. It belongs to  
the daughter she gave away the year  
she went crazy for sunlight. I will put  
this poem inside the glove and send  
it to her so that she might smell the  
lilacs her mother picked in the rain  
the night the wind blew her down.

