

The Bridge 2009 – 2nd Place Winner

Mary Langer Thompson – Apple Valley, Ca

Koko's Offerings

For Helen lung Oh

She used to bring gifts
to the nearby cathedral--
oranges, apples, and sometimes
exactly fifty-six dollars.
The tiny woman would approach
the altar in high platform shoes,
black and yellow striped tights and
blue eye shadow
smudged upward like wings and
bow her head, then
raise her tightly-wound
money scroll high
before placing it in the
velvet-lined collection plate.

Now, behind the doughnut shop
on the street where she slept
is a shrine--
a purple agapanthus in
a McDonald's cup,
a candle in chipped glass and
cards with ink that will fade,
leaving her name only an echo
in Echo Park.