

## **Michelle Shocked "Stillborn"**

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Midnight and Yolanda has a long walk home  
Midwifing a hard labor the baby was stillborn  
Still the mother asks to hold the child that never cries  
Rocks it gently softly keening a plaintive lullaby, hush

Yolanda walks along the river road  
Humming softly, "Were you there when they crucified  
my Lord?"  
The sky has never shined so bright, the night so dry  
and clear  
Crickets and cicadas consolations in the air

Yolanda's husband wakes the children and dresses  
them for school  
Your mother was up late last night, I've packed your  
lunch for you  
So the house lies silent and they all will be home soon  
By the time she rises in the early afternoon

Then once again Yolanda walks along the river road  
Where the live oaks are dying, pines are crying, sits  
beneath a willow  
Prying from that tender trunk a dry cicada shell  
Crushes it in her fist as the sound begins to swell

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