

## *A Refugee Contemplates Foam*

I made wings last night:  
petals of cardboard, sprinkled  
with glitter, yoked with Krazy  
Glue. In the garden at dusk,  
they shimmered on my daughter's  
back like a wedding of fireflies

Door to door she skipped  
and yelled, *Trick or treat!*  
Strangers opened their doors  
with such joy, I heard  
my dead mother whisper,  
*Yahmiki allah!* May god  
protect you

Later, we sat by the fountain,  
and counted candy but  
she took off to play  
with a fanged little  
baby-powdered vampire

Discarded, her wings floated  
with halloween regalia:  
fireflies drowned  
under Batman's cape,  
and a ladybug made of foam  
floated up to me

I thought of my life-vest,  
when the boat capsized  
in cold water and mother  
floated up weeks later,

white as the meat of fish.  
It's the nature of foam

I've read up on it: foam  
is pockets of gas trapped  
in a solid, it's a fabric of bubbles,  
three-dimensional tessellations.  
My vest's price was included  
in the smuggler's fee.  
*Leave her!* he yelled at me

*Yalla!* my daughter says,  
*Ma, let's go home.*  
I once stayed at a five-  
star hotel, its mattress  
the maid told me  
in accent like my mother's,

*Walla! It is ultra luxury!*  
Multi-layered foam  
finished in a quilt  
of organic cotton,  
I read up on it

But it's that cheap  
foam encased in orange vinyl,  
that jacket, which no matter  
how much you want to,  
does not let you drown,  
it has meant more to me

than any mattress  
in the world. I don't sleep  
much anyway. It feels  
a lot like drowning