Stillborn

Michelle Shocked

Midnight and Yoland 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, hushYolanda 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 airYolanda'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 afternoonThen 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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