

Michelle Shocked, Stillborn

Midnight and Yolanda has a long walk home
Midwife in a hard labor, the baby was stillborn
Still the mother asked to hold the child that never cried
rocked it gently softly keening a plaintive lullaby

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
In the air

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

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

Singing hush little baby, don't you say a word
Mama's gonna buy you a mockingbird
And if that mockingbird don't sing