

'Beldam'
Sue Rose

I go invisible or feared—
freak with a shock of serpents
hissing mortality, youth spent
baffled, regretting, in tears.
I walk with gall now, my plump,
my velvet, turned to wrack,
my soft eyes hardening
to stone. I am mad with fury,
cursing as I was cursed for lack
of steel, for being all blush
and milksop mewls. He left me
a wreck of salt and sting.
Never forget it was he
who made snakes root at my story.