

Sylvia Ashby

Enterprise: 1938 Style

On Saturday of the great event
I walked a mile or two down 12th
to claim the essential ice cream
from Hansi who'd promised
to donate to my cause.

The Cohens, childless friends
of my real parents from long ago
owned a delicatessen
where they also made ice cream.
I'd already spent my entire budget--
one dollar--on a small round cake
painted with a veneer of chocolate.

Fortunately my foster mother
cut the cake and helped serve;
about to turn ten, I had no clue:
All I knew was I'd decided
to give myself a party
because I'd never had one.

Afterward all six girls
left for the picture show nearby
each paying her own way, ten cents.
If receiving gifts was my goal
I don't recall getting any.

I'd been to my rich cousins' parties:
Bright streamers, paper hats with chin straps,
cakes with candles and edible pastel words,
gifts with ribbon and fancy wrap,
plus a thrilling game of pin-the-tail on the donkey--

so I understood about birthdays.
Still, mine was a fine party. In fact
the whole year was good.
Until--

Sylvia Ashby's background is in theatre, acting and writing; she's published 15 plays for family audiences. She began sending out poetry last year, now has several dozen pieces out or coming out: *Rhino '15*, *Abyss&Apex*, *Pantheon*, *Hermes*, *Subterranean*, plus a forthcoming anthology of Black Mountain College poetry.