She fell asleep,
head and little torso against my belly,
like tiny bubbles on hard water,
legs in between mine.

She went dreaming with a fortune
cookie wrapper crushed tightly in her fist:
Life is a tragedy for those who feel
and a comedy for those who think,
I had read to her as she ravished
half the sweet paper cookie.

Four Women posted at the corners
of my bed like seraphim, Ms. Simone's voice
rubs, lingers over my ache like balm; she
all too familiar with the peace of black soil
after a lifetime of grave blue
and darkness.

I admire, almost envy, the triumph of her sleep,
quick breaths filling and emptying her lungs,
lamp's faint light is winter sun cast on her cheeks,
her lashes spread like blackbird wings,
send me into flight, humming
tragically.