

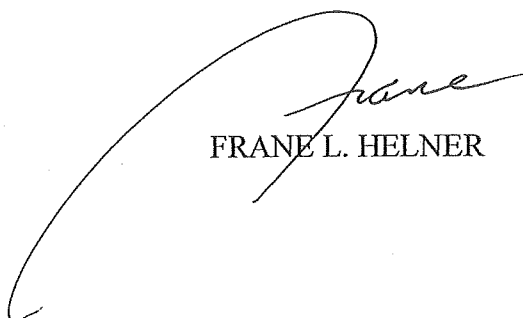
SHE IS HERE

Her voice comes to me
through morning's burnt-toast haze.
She is at the table hunched
above her favored brew ---
instant decaf coffee
from her chipped cup
*(She insists it gives her a zetz
as good as any perked...).*
Her bony hands, always icy,
girdle the cup.

Her toast has seen too many dunks.
It topples with a plop
she cannot hear, yet sees,
and chooses to ignore.
Spoonfed and slurped mush
from coffee cup's depth
is preferred to crisp.
She reaches for another slice of toast,
looks up, and I remark:
"you willed me here!"

Expression inscrutable,
my mother the conjurer,
my mother the witch with ESP
it scares her witless and makes me, wary,
remains silent. Yet,
my needy heart listens intently,
desperately, for her voice
to calm morning's chaos. Then,
day done, for the peace
of her murmured prayers
and my heart fill with thanks.

She is here



FRANE L. HELNER