**Upon Julia’s Clothes**

When as in silks my Julia goes,

Then, then (me thinks) how sweetly flowes

That liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes, and see

That brave Vibration each way free,

O how that glittering taketh me!

—Robert Herrick

**The Plaid Dress**

Strong sun, that bleach

The curtains of my room, can you not render

Colourless this dress I wear?—

This violent plaid

Of purple angers and red shames; the yellow stripe

Of thin but valid treacheries; the flashy green of kind deeds done

Through indolence high judgments given here in haste;

The recurring checker of the serious breach of taste?

No more uncoloured than unmade,

I fear, can be this garment that I may not doff;

Confession does not strip it off,

To send me homeward eased and bare;

All through the formal, unoffending evening, under the clean

Bright hair,

Lining the subtle gown . . . it is not seen,

But it is there.

—Edna St. Vincent Millay

**The Red Dress**

I always saw, I always said

If I were grown and free,

I'd have a gown of reddest red

As fine as you could see,

To wear out walking, sleek and slow,

Upon a Summer day,

And there’d be one to see me so

And flip the world away.

And he would be a gallant one,

With stars behind his eyes,

And hair like metal in the sun,

And lips too warm for lies.

I always saw us, gay and good,

High honored in the town.

Now I am grown to womanhood . . . .

I have the silly gown.

—Dorothy Parker

**Wedding Dress**

That Halloween I wore your wedding dress,

our children spooked & wouldn’t speak for days.

I’d razored taut calves smooth, teased each blown tress,

then—lipsticked, mascaraed, & self-amazed—

shimmied like a starlet on the dance floor.

I’d never felt so sensual before—

Catholic schoolgirl & neighborhood whore.

In bed, dolled up, undone, we fantasized:

we clutched & fused, torn twins who’d been denied.

You were my shy groom. Love, I was your bride.

—Michael Waters

**Wannabe Hoochie Mama Gallery of Realities’ Red Dress Code**

I have learned to be still

I have learned that I don’t have to go anywhere

to find the center of the universe

Anything can be that center

From any point, any speck, any dust mite

I can widen

what that speck includes

what that speck is willing

to embrace

what that speck can be the center of

until everything that is possible to get to

is included in the circle

so I have learned to be still

to let everything pass through me

as sieve

as net

that manages to catch

awareness of what passes through

me as I pass through them

in an exchange of tiny ropes of essences

(so I can wear necklaces everywhere, protein loops)

There is a claiming of me by what passes through

and the part of me passed through

are claimed by parts of what passes through

that touch it

so these point by point embraces

together make up realities

and can be put together in any order

to form one big remarkable thing

as what passes through me

passes through what passes through

everything else

in every form of reality

that is possible to make

from any locations possible

in any reality that is possible

including realities

made in imagination

for so much passes through

the mind

*—O see, O hear, O touch how things connect—*

Because of what’s possible

Because of all the hands

all the specks –which can be any shape

made of any substance

which can be any form—

Because of all the hands

all the specks touching in the exchanges

and groping their way

Because of all the hands involved

in shuffling pieces of maybe unlimited numbers

of flexible realities

& because of how easy it is to connect dots

one day red might arrive

some planes and geometries might meet

an event of red dress might happen

for dress is not always red

red happens to dress

red dress is an event

red might slip by dress

when they are on paths that do not cross

somewhere for some length of time

I do not put on a red dress

It is something outside of wardrobes

acceptable for me

some of what I do

some of what I believe and practice

could be questioned

if I put on a red dress

but if I am still

an event of red dress might happen

if I do not move from this spot

so that specks of both red

and dress

can find me

then there will be

—while they pass through—

realities I can feel

specks of red

and specks of dress

outfit and configure different parts of me

at different speeds

for different lengths of time

during which hoochie mama gets in

at least one of all possible equations

and I will walk out of here

where I have stood as if hard at work

on display in a gallery

no worse for the where I’ve been

apparently unchanged

but the red dress

was put on under my skin

and it fits me

Oh it’s so amazing

that everything that passes through

fits.

—Thylias Moss