

## **Paper Lanterns**

Though our wooden stage was long ago  
torn down, moments of Mitch linger  
fifty years after I tried to be him.  
But it is Blanche who sings most in my head.  
I hardly knew the actress who played the part.

but the eloquent words Tennessee gave her.  
still dance in mind, like birch trees  
waving in woods blanched but blooming,  
petals drifting, fragile and fragrant.

I think of Tom, too, roiled in regret  
about the hidden part of him that was  
his own delicately, broken soul,  
the sweet sister, the unfolding Rose,

who was a menagerie of glass.  
These plays sing as we try them on,  
hoping, as we all need to do,  
for the kindness of strangers.