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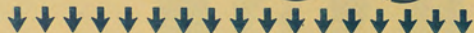
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((!?.*!!!!?!...))

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THE MOTH AND THE THEATER

1

The moth at the cue-setting session
banged against the colored light
deprived of an ancient right
to silent gyroscopic balance.

This fellow's ancestors flew right
Gliding through the hot azure night.

2

This thing we call theater
is a sophistication of the highest order,
and yet it is a grossly barbaric rite.

Faces from dreams
train their secret, precious eyes on actors and actresses
with a hope indefinable.
Such a short time
in such a small place
to ask such questions.

Doors close softly
and once more we invoke ourselves in ghostly pools of light,
expecting with touching naivete
to discover why we are here.

Kirk Feather

THE ABORTION

hate red
blue veined
rivered body
plopped in a pan

battered
broken
flesh balloon

strung
on an umbilical
cord

a Baggie burial
for baby

David Marcoux



David Marcoux 87

JUNKYARD

Body on body
wildly
contorted
silent lovers

graveyard orgy.

Where

tire hulks
lay naked
breathing
in rhythm
with each other
and the
night

dripping grease
and sweat
exhausted
overheated

satisfied.

David Marcoux

REFRIGERATOR

my refrigerator is
the White House
(as white as)

is made (for) by G.E.
(or is it Westinghouse)

is stuffed with
fruits (pompous
pomegranates)
and vegetables
(stewed tomatoes)

big parties
can feast
on cold cuts
(in the economy)
iced screams
(and other treats)

is organized (too)
topshelf's expensive
(for big cheese)

lower shelves'
stuff can
be bought
(cheaper)

my refrigerator is
just like
the White House
(the one in)

David Marcoux

ANOTHER FABLE

The ant
dances clumsily
with cake crumbs.
Cheese and termite
eggs make no
better partners.

Waltzing, waltzing,
but always waltzing
somewhere. It
has no time
to fiddle around.

Entomologists
will say that
the grasshopper dies
before winter.

David Marcoux

NO TURNING BACK

Parks are the final resting places of the old.
Migrating with hunched bodies
they march in columns
keeping to the side of the road,

so that there they can stop, stand
crooked, silently implanted
and turn into trees.

It is instinct.

Many times I have seen
grey faces crack and swell
into withered limbs and rotted trunks
waiting for the death sparrow
to come and roost
in these wooden death markers.

David Marcoux

PARADOX

Shuffling through the park
I saw a bird
hopping sideways going forward
and was little moved
except to a quick thought of
revenge or reconciliation.
All birds are bearers of gifts
sculpting neat little piles of dung
on shoulders and hats sometimes
with great accuracy from above and
overtimes swooping, swirling, and
sniping from in close, and then
running away through the wind
laughing like mischievous children.

As I shuffled closer, planning
a strategy for the counter-attack
the sparrow bounced itself across
the stone walk.
This bird was not going to attack.
The gift, the gift that Icarus
had so dearly paid for was gone
removed by a stone from a child's hand.

I reached for bird with a hand
that once had belonged to a child
had hunted sparrows with stones and bottles,
but whose fingers now like old leather
were smooth and warm.
Time had taught me to seek this bird
and others, to share with them popcorn
and lonely Thursdays.
A broken wing? Poor little thing.
I hummed a melody perhaps this same
bird had taught me and stroked
the soft belly.
If I let you go you'll die it's too cold.
I'd like to take you home, but...

It was getting dark and there was
little else I could do...
I washed the blood from my hands
in the duckpond
and shuffled off.

David Marcoux

CUP POEM I

the nature-beaten cup
crouched sullen among
the leaves
brown against brown
between brown
the ringed thumb handle pointed
to the layers
of caved mud that
tumbled when
this battered cup unearthed
speckled brown
edged carefully in mud
never shattered by the
impact of the ages
only marked by one thinly etched
crack slowly climbing but
never dividing

Nancy Panners

NEVER ANTIQUES

Not
ignoring the knotholes
poking fun
at the smooth
surfacing perfection of
hand-worked wood,
conversion to plastics
and other finery
leaves us knocking
on wood with
formica tops
preserving the
beauty of
the machine
tended to by men
bearing the names
of forefathers
driven
by necessity.

Now
we hit a
solid wall
protected by
the thin sheen
of indestructible
plastic.

Nancy Panners

THE LONELY HOTEL

1.

An open window on the third floor
Of the Lonely Hotel sucks in noise from the street below.
The wooden floor, polished by years of pacing feet,
Knows no time, only seasons.
The faucet leaks, its water playing silent music
On the chipped agate sink.
Witness of many denials.

2.

The bureau, its top stained like an old dream,
Guards jagged messages carved on its sides:

Cornelius & Sue
Tewksbury
"72"

Register of the past.

3.

The bed leans against the wall
Supporting those who dream on its mattress.
The springs grind against each other
Played on by their sleeping load.
Berth in fantasy's harbor.

4.

Another shutter-flapping day
At the hotel. Guests going in and out,
One by one, unrecognizing, unrecognized.
The clerk sits in the lobby chewing tobacco,
The juice staining his matted beard.
Familiar figure:
In Sante Fe during the 1870's,
Boston at the turn of the century,
Chicago, dancing through the roaring twenties,
In a New York shipyard during the war.
Old man with familiar face, everybody's memory.
Now merely a keeper of keys
Accommodating those at the Lonely Hotel.

George McFadden

MEN IN GRAY FELT HATS

1. the village

Sandy sidewalks and rusty trucks
In the shade of the sun
Hold dryness for eyes to choke on.
Squeaking barroom doors
Wind into the ears of the
Men in gray felt hats.

2. the town

Red and green electricity shouts
Walk — Don't Walk
On both sides of two-way streets.
Locks click in glass and steel;
Time to wander home for the
Men in gray felt hats.

3. the city

The beat of a drum
Echoes in an alley:
The thuds of the betrayer's head.
Concrete walls, shrouded in white-wash,
Scarred by paint and chalk,
Stand in labyrinths between the
Men in gray felt hats.

George McFadden

HOLIDAY

There sat yesterday's man
On the worn wooden steps of a tenement house
Wondering dreams; dreaming wonders
Reading a copy of *The Boston Globe*
Dated 1910.

The lonely song of the sea gulls
Rings in the ears of a blue-eyed immigrant boy.
Grey smoke from ships
Is puffed through the air
Like children blowing bubbles.

He peers through cotton candy
And peppermint stick balloons.
A second-rate circus comes into view:
First-rate clowns bring the magic of laughter;
Dancers swim through jack-in-the-box music.
The circus must never end.

A sudden shift of the restless wind—
A newspaper falls to the ground.
An old man looks and smiles,
His mind on holiday.

John Macomber



REFLECTIONS

I

Old age,
a spent match
Blackened and bent forward

Crushed by the light
it once supported.

II

A cigarette is lit
enkindling hope.
It burns with the ardor of youth.
On and on
like some majestic furnace in miniature
Slowly, irrevocably, until ash.
Then flicked like reminiscence
to a scattering wind.

And what is left, then,
but to light another.
New, imperially slim,
straight and proud,
Unknowing of its destiny.

James W. Dawson

ENLIGHTENED

Enlightened I was
In the terrified darkness--
The dusk strangled
My great screams;
The handcuffs bit my wrists;
Blindfolded by forty staring eyes
Watching without supplication,
Fish gazing pacifically
Behind glass
As I gasped in
Poisonous fear--
Except that
The night-blank starers
Smiled too indulgently with
Folded hands
To be human as fish; though
The iron arms
Dragged me but gently from the street,
Though the crash of the metal floor
Bruised no more
Than my skull

Janet Rothbart

SHORTNESS

I feel parched--
Dried seaweed, stretched
Rattling beneath insistent
Plucking fingers--
The cold sand thirsts;
Here! Here!
Here! The sun
Pulls me unwilling to her
Doting hot gaze, scathed brittle.
Bother! I am Gulliver,
Tied with threads and splinters
(Though, prostrated, I am no more
than eight inches tall--).
I despise
Shortness. I cannot fall
With sand in my mouth
To drown
In a lukewarm sea.

Janet Rothbart

IRON GUTTER CITY GRATE

Iron gutter city grate
Has seen more than muddy
Water
(As thought the engineer
In conference,
Pointing confidently at the
Maps).
A man drowned in drink lay
There; surprised ears muffled
against
The crisp steps of noon,
Clutching fingers
Blackened with idleness
Implored against the sewage,
Sobbing
To save him.

Janet Rothbart

NEW YORK'S GIFT

You may run and lock your brass door
With panic-slippery fingers--
You may clatter down your white blinds
Hastily, so I may not
Glance in;
You may even blaspheme
And glare your brave pale
Electrical lights
And fade my presence
For a time--
But I am here,
My friend,
Always--
And I am far darker
And more enduring
Than any of your feeble pale defenses;
And I will seep into your lungs
Through the open windows
Or into your heart with
Your midnight fear.

Janet Rothbart



*Rosalie
Lazarus*
12-72

ADAM'S SPAWN

Splinters of uniformly grey metal
Set up, obedient robot soldiers waiting
On a shelf,
Infinitely innocent, infinitely patient,
To be propelled, then, on
A deathly mission
Of steely suicide--
Manufactured minions of evil,
The apple in disguise;
Beware--
This is the last garden.

Janet Rothbart

LET US COME HOME AGAIN

Let us come home again
From flying bullets, squelch and
Unsung solitude.
Despite blurred vision of a clearly-flown flag
At half mast in bloody red
Faded blue and
Pallid white,
We'll sing our song of faithfulness,
However marred in spirit.
However unkempt in body or
Beguiled in mind,
Let us be free despite the knowledge
That we will be ever pierced with
Bullets not unlike those we left,
But silent, with a
Deeper, slower sting.

jam



FOLLOW THE RIVER OF MY FEELINGS

Follow the river of my feelings
To the sea of my soul.

Listen to the murmuring of my river,
See how far you can plunge into my sea.

A rainbow is shining in my heart;
You may have my pot of gold.

jam

I MIGHT HAVE LIKED TO SMILE AT YOU

I might have liked to smile at you
Sometime during the night,
But I could only pretend
And smile at darkness--
How utterly unique
And amazingly empty.

jam

IS IT PERHAPS THAT I'VE GROWN OLD?

Is it perhaps that I've grown old?
I can't seem to remember which
Part of the song I used to like--
Or the song...
Oh yes, the music is the same:
Same melody, same words, same connotation--
Only faded... far away...
Is it just because the record's scratched
Or am I?

jam

BENEATH THUNDER CLOUDS

I have lain with her
beneath thunder of clouds,
kissed and kissed
that chin, those eyes, those velvet ear lobes,
and drank that sweet breath.

I murmured nonsense, thus intoxicated,
and there was the strength of conquest flowing
through my frame.

Rustling movements of giant oaks with rich green leaves,
and the delicious perfumed sweat of a young woman's body
are gone.

Winter approaches, as cold as a diamond,
harbinger of vulnerability,
winter dark.

The snow that rests on the window ledge
whispers to me that the world sleeps,

but for my part
I take summer in my arms
beneath thunder clouds.

Kirk Feather

BACK

I WANT MY BOOKS BACK.

I WANT MY C.P.O. JACKET AND MY
PONDEROSA SHIRT BACK.

I WANT ALL OF MY BODY
BACK, ALL

OF MY HEART, AGAIN.

GIVE IT TO ME

GIVE IT TO ME

HAND IT OVER, WILL YA?

COLETTE LAFOND

99 CENTS

I function only as well as my DNA;
I am daily affected by my surroundings;
I am nothing more than water and minerals
Thrown together ambitiously;
I am priced by the scientists at 99 cents--

Why then do you expect so much of me?

I cannot be what I am not.

Why then do you fantasize I am someone else,
Then blame me for not being that someone?

What I am
I am.
Admit it.

Suzanne Nolan

HAROLD-ALL-RIGHT-NOW

like a basket
of scrap paper
all crumpled in haste
and disorder
confusion
reflecting moments of pain
worry and compromises
i wish once too often
that the magic-man
harold-all-right-now
with his sticky fingertips
and wild flowered tie
could zip out
and uncrumple the paper
or even dump it somewhere
where it would no longer
concern me
making everything right
while i take
a walk
under blue skies
that rain down smiles of yellow-orange
instead of gray tears

Ghaist

FROST

Frost
biting
Chewing at my hands, my face, my feet--
traveling
Chilling my body
The frost — it freezes....
Freezes my soul.
I'm so cold
so cold
so co

Ann Morrongiello

RELEASED

Lavender skies—seemingly carrying the weight of all men who have died--
So heavy, ominous. Christ! Surely it must fall.

Trees—thrashing, straining. Like men who at Death's final beckon; no--
Command—refuse to yield.

Winds—pushing, crying. The voice of the dead—laughter, talking, cursing. Who
knows? The voice of the living?

And then—the rain--
Sweet blessed rains. Pouring forth with no restraint—capable of digging
graves. Violent Hard Rains

Tapering off to soft warm drops. Liquid crystals, zircons each.
Weeping gently,
weeping.

Ann Morrongiello

BURNING, RA DANCED

Burning, Ra danced fiercely on the waters
While cool winds salved his temper,
Gulls dipping and squalling, searching for a noon
day meal;
The surf slapping onto the rocks
Carved, sculptured, chipped by Time
Into a cave of solitude for us.

Two beings separated
Joined by utterances of breath and the sharing
of Life
Enjoying the beauty of a summer's noon
At peace with Man and Friend and Self
At peace on a summer's noon.

Ann Morrongiello





THE OLD WOMAN

Someone walked by the house, now falling into a state of disrepair. The woman saw simply a shadow on the road, her failing eyes and sharp senses knowing that there was life. She smoothed back her white lifeless hair and smiled to herself, trying to find the fence that marked the boundary of her world. Her hands found the splintery wooden slats, and her voice readied itself to speak a word of greeting which would travel to the other side of the universe, the other side of the fence.

The someone on the road stopped for a moment, then walked on.

She remained smiling, her hair smoothed back, waiting.

Elizabeth Kelley

I

Always in winter, the cold and barren season when the hills and hollows of the countryside rest in frozen silence. It goes on and on until February, until the Feast of Fools when it reaches an icy impasse. One can feel it slithering along the ground like a fog off the heath, wrapping itself around the feet, and then moving on its random way. Perhaps I should explain further. Yes, I must.

There was a morning during the very season which I have described when Albrecht woke not feeling his regular self. He got up and went to the table and tried to regain his equilibrium. His wife noticed the trouble and tried to tell him, but his ears were deaf to her words. He dressed and ate and again tried to regain the regularity of mind that goes with life. Again his mind would not flex. Later on in the morning, on the main street of the town, Albrecht felt the abnormality much more acutely. His friends told him to be careful of himself, to rest and not exert himself. Again the advice fell upon deaf ears. He told himself that there was nothing wrong. He was sick, that he knew, but he would get better like he had so many times before. Even at his advanced age Albrecht would not admit that sickness might get the best of him. The very truth of the matter was that time had caught up with Albrecht but he had not caught up with time.

The day treaded on into afternoon, and Albrecht felt himself being caught up more and more into an icy mist. Swirling around him, it caused him occasionally to stumble and shake his head. At last, in the late afternoon, he stumbled and fell on his way up to his apartment. He grasped the wooden railing and started to cough. He couldn't stop coughing, and waves of the cold kept sweeping over him one right after the other. He now had to admit to himself that he could not go on. The cold now started to sting. He no longer cared about it; he just felt the necessity of accepting it. What happened after this point, one cannot say, for everyone freezes differently.

As of late I have felt a chill roll over myself every now and then. Although I know what the cold brings, I still don't know how to accept it. When I feel myself freezing, will I act any differently than Albrecht? Will I really admit to myself what is going to happen, or will I rationalize like Albrecht and stall it off with transparent thoughts? I've yet to settle this question. This in itself is a rationalization, I think. Can it be otherwise? In my mind the cold brings on an even colder doubt. A cold insincere doubt that falls on my mind, freezes, and then evaporates, leaving me feeling as if it

were never there. I should admit that I'm used to this apathetic doubt — isn't everyone?

II

I am in the Lower Falls Road area of Belfast. There are four of us walking down the street. There are not many people on the street, for it is getting late, and the day is fading into a dangerous limbo twilight. The fellow next to me has a .44 Magnum in a holster on his hip. It bulges under his coat. I ask him if I can look at it for I have never seen a pistol of such size. He hands it to me, and we continue walking while I am looking at it. We come to a corner and see a large crowd of people on the side-street. Looking farther down I see why they are there: there are four British soldiers with their backs against one of the buildings, and the crowd is jeering at them. The steel of the pistol burns into my palm. One of the soldiers starts to unshoulder his rifle. The crowd starts to yell all the more. I can see what is going to happen. The cold freezes thoughts of hate in my mind. I am compelled to do something. I aim the Magnum at the soldier with the rifle in his hands, and I squeeze the trigger. The bullet hits him in the stomach and throws him against the building. His rifle falls out of his hands, and he falls down in a heap. He tries to talk, but when he does, blood gurgles out of his mouth. Now I must kill the other three or they will kill me. I have to kill them. I want to kill them. I want to see them all die like the first one. Quickly I aim and shoot the second one, hitting him in the chest. I aim again and shoot the third. I hit him in the abdomen, and blood gushes out. The last soldier shoots at me with his rifle, but he misses. I pull off two wild shots. The last one hits him in the head, shattering it like a glass bowl. His beret catches a large portion of his head, and it is slapped against the building by the concussion. It falls on the street and absorbs some of the blood. They all lie on the street in heaps, their blood coloring the street death-red. I stand looking at what I have done. In a few seconds I feel both pleasure and revulsion. I am not sickened by the sight of the bodies but rather by the fact that I have enjoyed doing what I have done. I look around me, and everyone is looking at me. I start running and throw away the pistol. My blood-spattered shoes move faster and faster. I scramble over a wall and run through back yards. I keep moving, but I can't escape my sickening delight. I keep on until my feelings freeze out. I vanish into another dream — doesn't everyone?

Danny sits in the White Sands Tap at a table with his father who is frozen stiff in his chair. This is a typical New England bar, and no one pays any attention to the old man; they think that he's drunk. They have been sitting in the bar for three days, since the old man had succumbed to the cold. They knew that it was going to happen, they had often talked about it, so when his father started to freeze up Danny brought him to the cafe and fed him shots and beers until he froze up completely. Now it is all over. The old boy is as hard as alabaster. The bartender brings over another glass of beer and asks Danny, for the fifteenth time, to get his father out of the bar. Danny looks at him, sips some of his beer, and then goes to the men's room, saying, "This is for you, Charly. Why don't you let him sit there, he gives the place some atmosphere." The bartender shrugs his shoulders and then puts a dirty bar rag over the old man's head. Around four o'clock, Danny calls a cab to come get him. While waiting for the cab, he has two more beers. The cab comes, pulling up in front of the bar. Two large Arabs get out of the back seat of the cab and come into the bar. Both wear kuffies, agals and work clothes. Danny motions for them to take the corpse to the cab.

"You can break him up and put him in the trunk if it's any easier," he adds.

"What are you going to do with him?" asks the bartender.

"We're going to boil him for supper."

"You can't do that."

"Why?"

"Because...because...because you just can't. It's not right."

"Well, I'm going to. When I'm hungry, I eat. Doesn't everyone?"

George McFadden

A soft breeze drifted in through the open windows, carrying with its scent the promise of another spring. Careless laughter mingled with the steady drone of conversation that ran the length of the room. Repartee flew briskly back and forth, like the thrusts of a sparring partner trying to outdo his opponents. Over in the corner, there began a spirited discussion of atheism, led by a girl in red. Her face, already flushed and vivid, grew increasingly more so as she argued against orthodoxy. But even while she talked, her eyes, like dark thieves, stole across the floor to where Henry Calvert sat.

Relaxed to the point of indolence, Henry Calvert stretched his long legs and smiled at nobody in particular. This gathering, of which he was the host, seemed to be a success so far. Henry loved success. His clear eyes swept the room and came to rest on the girl in red, who was now giggling nervously in the corner.

"They're all half drunk over there," said Henry's sister in a scornful undertone. "Especially Lisa. Just look at her, making an exhibition of herself. She ought to be ashamed. All that hypocritical talk about not believing in God! Lisa hasn't missed a day of choir practice in six years, and everybody knows it."

Henry's sister, whose name was Norah, had a reputation for speaking her mind freely. Now she fell back against the divan with a frown. Two narrow strands of hair came loose and straggled down her face, giving Norah an air of puritan severity. After watching her in silence for a moment, Henry gazed deep into the glass which he was holding.

"It sparkles," he announced, dreamily. "Just like my life, it sparkles."

Norah yawned.

"I'm at my peak tonight," continued Henry, an undercurrent of excitement running through the calmness of his voice. "Here, with all our friends gathered together like this—I'm just glad that it's spring. There's something inside me that's ready to burst, like the bubbles in that champagne bottle."

"You're certainly in a strange mood!" said Norah, eying him suspiciously. As she did so, the cigarette-holder slipped through her fingers to fall, unheeded, upon the divan. A thin, blue haze of smoke drifted between herself and her brother.

"Your damned sofa's on fire," said Henry, looking amused.

"Well, why don't you do something?" Norah snapped, as she sprang six inches into the air. Several people laughed, but no one made a move to help.

"Do something, I tell you!" she repeated.

"Put it out with champagne," suggested the girl in red, going off into a little bubble of laughter across the room.

"That's not a bad idea," said Henry Calvert, thoughtfully. "Only I hate to waste—"

"You fool!" cried Norah. "I ordered those cushions from Montreal! I won't have them ruined. Give me your glass, quick!"

Henry handed her the glass, and she poured its contents over the Canadian cushions.

"All gone," said the girl in red, whose name was Lisa.

When the excitement had subsided, Norah turned to her brother and said, "She's drunk as a bat tonight."

"Who's drunk?" demanded Henry, coming out of a reverie.

"Lisa, of course. And all because of you, Henry."

Henry blinked. "Me? What have I done now?" Norah smiled maliciously. "You haven't done anything, fool. That's the whole problem. She's just as crazy about you as ever. Goodness knows why!"

Henry frowned. "Not anymore. Not since last March," he said.

"Oh, yes, Henry. I can tell."

Henry refilled his empty glass, looking gratified in spite of himself.

"Oh, well. I love them both," he said at last, magnanimously.

"That makes you a libertine!" said Rufus, who had suddenly materialized, as if by magic, behind Henry's chair. As always, Rufus' attire was worth more than a passing glance. He wore a peaked hunting cap only one shade redder than his hair. His huge fur coat ended in muddy overshoes, which appeared to be in the final stages of decay.

"God, you look terrible!" said Henry, with a snicker. "What've you been doing, anyway—running through the Great Swamp?"

"I was out hunting when I suddenly remembered your damned party," muttered Rufus. "I came running all the way. So you'll have to take me the way I am. And here I find YOU with a shirt and tie, all dressed up like a stiff!"

"Rufus has just received a severe emotional shock," said Henry in a loud voice. "He requires sustenance."

Several willing hands pointed to a nearby table, on which a decanter sat.

"Hallelujah!" murmured Rufus, stumbling over his boots. "Whatever your defects as a human being, Henry, you lay a mighty fine table."

Henry leaned back and stretched his arms above his head.

"Pom pom pom," he murmured. "How does that song go, Rufus?"

"Which song?"

"The one in that musical comedy. You remember? It went 'pom pom pom,' but what came after?"

"Came after what?"

"After 'pom pom pom'?"

"God, you're really out of your head," said Rufus, beginning to laugh. "He's really out of his head, Norah."

"I know that," answered Norah, impatiently. "Hand me another cigarette, will you, Rufus? There's a rip in your jacket," she added, eyeing him critically.

"Is there?" asked Rufus. He looked despondent. "One of those goddam dogs must have jumped on me. I can't remember it happening, though. Good Lord, Henry, there's Lisa over there in a red dress! I never expected you to invite HER. Considering what happened last March."

"Forgive and forget," murmured Henry.

A whiff of honeysuckle, drifting in through the open window, struck him full in the face.

"It's a night for living," he sighed.

Lisa, her heels clicking, came zigzagging her way across the room toward Henry. Her crimson dress, flounced at the waist, swayed slightly as she walked.

"Henry's in love," she observed, her voice ringing out in the hush which had suddenly fallen upon the room. "Aren't you, Henry?"

Henry treated her to one of his rare, cryptic smiles.

"Yes, Henry's in love," repeated Lisa, more loudly this time. There was a ragged sharpness in her voice which had not been there before. "But why isn't she here tonight, Henry? Why not? Didn't you invite her to your little party?"

This scene promised to be ugly. By now, all heads were turned toward Lisa, whose voice ran recklessly on: "I wonder where she can be, Henry, while you sit there mooning about her? Out in somebody else's car?"

Henry, who had grown very pale, half rose, then as abruptly sank down into his chair again.

"I think," he said slowly, "that you're awfully drunk, Lisa. You'd better go home."

"Where is she, Henry?" repeated Lisa, her voice rising in a hysterical crescendo. "You're so in love with her, and there you sit, and she doesn't even show up at your party! She doesn't even bother to call! There you sit, mooning over her all evening, when she isn't even here!"

Lisa's companion for the evening was a tall, rather dull young man, who now cleared his throat in embarrassment.

"It's getting late, Lisa. Hadn't we better—?"

"No!" cried Lisa passionately, stamping her foot. "Not until Henry answers my question!"

Norah, hostess for the gathering, looked uncertain. In his huge boots, Rufus clumped over to stand, a watchful huntsman, behind Henry's chair. With an obvious effort, Henry looked Lisa directly in the face.

"She's spending the week-end with her father, in Boston," he answered quietly. "And I planned this party on the spur of the moment. You know that. It's not her fault at all. She's coming back on Monday, anyway."

Without warning, Lisa burst into tears.

"Take me home, somebody, take me home!" she cried. Her companion rose obligingly.

"Right this minute, Lisa."

Amid dead silence, the door closed behind them with a click.

Henry rose, feeling very blind, and groped his way across the room toward one of the open windows.

"You'd better stop him," said his sister Norah, turning to Rufus. "He really doesn't know what he's doing anymore."

Rufus was halfway across the room before the words had left her mouth. His heavy overshoes left tracks of mud on the shining parquet floor. Henry, who had reached the window, stood as still as a statue, with the scent of spring still fresh upon his face.

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