



FANNY HOWE

*poems*

# GONE

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The publisher gratefully acknowledges  
the generous contribution to this book  
provided by Joan Palevsky.



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G O N E

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All this day I have been in a dream, half miserable  
and half ecstatic: miserable because I could not  
follow it out uninterruptedly; ecstatic because it  
shewed almost in the vivid light of reality the  
ongoings of the infernal world.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË

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When I was a child

I left my body to look for one  
whose image nestles in the center of a wide valley  
in perfect isolation wild as Eden  
till one became many: spirits in presence

yes workers and no workers up on the tops  
of the hills in striped overalls

toy capes puffing  
and blue veils as yet unrealized in the sky

I made myself homeless  
on purpose for this shinnying up the silence

murky hand-pulls  
Gray the first color  
many textured clay beneath my feet  
my face shining up I lost faith but once

(theology)

---

To stay with me  
that path of death was soft

this pump's emotion  
irregular, the sand

blew everywhere

My hands were tied  
to one ahead

driving a herd to the edge

(mother)

She said I said why

fear there's nothing to it  
at any minute  
a stepping out of and into  
no columns no firmament

Most of each thing  
is whole but contingent  
on something about  
the nearest one to it



---

Confused but moving  
the only stranger I know  
has a bed a blanket  
a heartfulness famous  
for hypocrisy

When she's not trusting anyone  
she leans her crown  
upon her hand  
snowslop all the way to the grating  
before lying down

in a little block of childhood  
(one hour for the whole of life)  
and her book to record it

---

Was the chasm between her mind  
and things

constituted by the intellect's catalogue  
or by the presence of senses  
(around her face

objects fall into special functions

tangled loops against concrete walls  
moonish nuclear fission capped with molten gold)

or by a sticky sub-atomic soul

---

See how this being at the neck and bowel  
gives the head and groin a taste of hell  
that seeps throughout some nervous systems  
all senses battered and enflamed  
where the soul drinks disabled  
and attacks only a she a she can see  
who smiles in dreams between clenched hands  
sobbing from wanting to win her pity  
her in the born-hating  
thing she finds there living

---

(Skin is what I see and they see when we see feelings)

Not I but a she-shaped one  
over fluid frame

sized to capture what comes in

agony that heaven doesn't begin

(to know the soul imprinting is in pain)

---

Short of being nailed but sure of being labeled

now my name is forced now her name is first  
into my ear my hearing her not being

here so I will know that this is the hour  
when I will have to hear her

named and cringing rise  
to the utterance

as my own excruciating presence

---

Very pain it came first  
through my eyes  
they were so compressed  
I could still see  
forms that will never be  
eliminated and illuminations  
and words whose imprint  
(branded in agony)  
still can't be interpreted

---

Coal is the first sign of a wreck

that your face may blacken  
with bliss of the night

Recognition

You can hide  
from whoever is red enough  
with force or sex to make you sad

---

The history of the defeated

Eternal lie  
as if to prove  
the principal  
root of the verb  
to falsify  
is life  
itself an excess  
since whoever is  
identified  
is already buried  
while staying still  
will show what nothing is



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