



FANNY HOWE

poems

GONE

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FANNY HOWE

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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