

From 'Upwards, into the White Eye Rising (Section 3)'

by Iain James Robb

A fractured world we haunt: the streets, the schoolyards-
Across the floodlit roads, where we shared drunk adonics:
No marbled halls but towers that stole the stars' eyes-
 Flat-roofed serrations against greys or blue:
And the toppled courts that apple-topped our passions
Rebuilt now, whitewashed for the rain-washed children,
Who take our place, in mists they may not see through,
 Taking us two, now.

These are the portents laid against our eyelids:
That *all* shall know the things we shall not weep for;
They are not *theirs* now. Ours, the wreck of meadows,
 Portcullised rivers, and the fleeing firths.
The dead things held lost by the bending mercies
Of snow won't mourn the ones who join our distance,
Who made engagement wreaths of paper rainbows,
 Torn, before the rains.

But through all this, if one more fixed thing falters,
They too find permanence — change is the endless
Guest, some captive horse has lost its halters:
 Our *sense* the quest for *its* forgetfulness.
The supping spring once drunk with wounded roses
Neglects itself, as moons made blind by cloudlets-
That shroud your eye too as its own cloud closes,
 Yours, and only you-

And over what glints in its hidden crescent,
I can catch once more at last the straits of towers,
Then the night processions of the lost and wanted,
 The failures, glories and the quest for flesh.
Beyond it all our words were fraying garlands,
Or tinselled crowns, for forms that sensed no haloes-
That came from blocks and malls that outlived radiance,
 Of the violet time:

And in coronations blue their eyes upon us
Sang of things that chant behind the starlight;
Their skeins on skin that seemed to mock the moonlight
 Left your flesh within its laving waves.
Caressed, caressing, in the rushing spillbright,
We dreamed the dead stars' paths would stay perennial,
With us, as stalwart in the captive moon's might,
 Rudderless, astray:

Before the crab's sign, loosed aslant inside my body,
Threatened love that strayed like something stalwart:
What left to lose again, but all that casts out beauty,
 That which breathes forth you?
Though to join me, straitened, not requested duty,
Two we leave the lamplit strands, with death not given
Its force to waste me with, your face not riven
 From our final view.

Come forth and let me weave my arms around you;
With deaths more deep than death your eyes seem heavy:
Though a game it is they play, of Punch and Judy,
 A lantern shadowshow:
Some magic mime of kings, with all their clowning-
A cardboard knight rides high and plays the frown-king.
Though his clouds pass just as blank, against man's flat horizon,

We remain, alone.

