

Afternoon Piece

Mary Alice Kessler

I sat down in the gray and green chair
And crossed my legs with retrospect,
The stem of the shining creme de menthe glass
Quivered between his long white fingers.

I pulled a petal of phlox from the stem,
How cool the crushed veins felt in my palm,
The stem of the shining creme de menthe glass
Quivered between his long white fingers.

"Have you read the latest F. Scott Fitzgerald?"
I asked his oceanic eyes,
The stem of the shining creme de menthe glass
Quivered between his long white fingers.

"Do you want to walk, do you want to sing,
(Or shall we feed lemons to green balloons)?"
The stem of the shining creme de menthe glass
Quivered between his long white fingers.

I lifted a cigarette from the jade box,
"Remember the antiques on 49th Street?"
The stem of the shining creme de menthe glass
Quivered between his long white fingers.

I stood near the window and stared at the line
Of gray and green needles stuck through the mist,
The stem of the shining creme de menthe glass
Quivered between his long white fingers.

"New York is like everything else nowadays,
A blaze and decadent means to an end,"
The stem of the shining creme de menthe glass
Quivered between his long white fingers.

"Tell me, why did you ask me to come?
I'm meeting some friends at a quarter to five."
The stem of the shining creme de menthe glass
Quivered between his long white fingers.

"You must hate me terribly, why won't you speak?
After all, you must know I've had other affairs."
The stem of the shining creme de menthe glass
Quivered between his long white fingers.

"Let's forget about this and go dancing tonight,
'Lover, gold-hatted, high bouncing lover'."
The stem of the shining creme de menthe glass
Quivered between his long white fingers.

"I really must go, shall I see you again?
I'll be in tomorrow at half past one."
The stem of the shining creme de menthe glass
Lay in a thousand splintered pieces.

Purple Patch

You sauntered through my mind
Like the little broom-man
Who walks from house to house
Whistling Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

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