

# The Designer

Frances King

If I thought I could bargain  
Or bribe or make even trade  
And return to your graces,  
• Your small lighted room. . . . .  
If I brought an apron of violets,  
Of miniature white flowers,  
Would I gain entrance?  
Would they give me a glance  
Through the door?

If I thought I could bargain. . . .  
I'll send you a blackbird  
That sings very well  
If you'll grant me one fragment of our intense  
conversation. . . .No?  
If I could bribe. . . .  
Remember how you loved bittersweet?  
Let me bring you several sprays  
Of the brusks, red-orange fruit.  
Let me add a few plums  
And a large honey comb,  
And all I ask is your dark glances.  
No?  
If I could trade. . . .  
I'll trade you a basket of  
Shining silver snails  
For a small promise.  
I'll trade you a narrow kite  
And a rag doll  
For a swift kiss.  
No?  
I see I ask too much,  
But I'll have you yet,  
For a door shuts out perfume,  
And a room is empty  
Without a girl's laughter,  
And a lamp is lonely  
Shining on an open book.

## That Year

Frances King

The senior year was shorter than the rest  
And twice as sharp. Sometimes the ivy seemed  
Not half so green or heavy as the year  
Before. And was the movement of the trees  
Beyond the glass more sad, the way it seemed?  
If "Alice" grew more deep and Frost almost  
Lost favor with the crowd, was this so new?  
If friends wore swords and foes bore olive wreaths  
In fettered hands, was that so strange? I feared  
The times when neutral lines of Henry James  
(Less innocent, more traced with secret hopes)  
Would rise from tablecloths in other rooms.  
If labs remember "Tristan und Isolde" at ten,

(October sun like May, the dusty moss  
In bottles)——Let it there remain. If all  
The willow leaves were whispering "cherry tree,"  
And steeples of New Hampshire thrust the sky  
Aside, what matters that? If Shakespeare smiled  
And Spenser frowned upon the edges of  
Long conversations on the moonlit steps,  
What proof against the breach? For though the "seem"  
And "is" were tossed, and though the heart sought fast  
To know the moment to refrain from thought,  
There still remained a life to portion out  
In silver, when Thoreau would serve no use.

## The Penitent

Frances King

We kneel so tall,  
We kneel so very straight,  
On the frozen ground,  
On the small grave.  
This is the cemetery time,  
This is the grave's year.  
The brown hooded figures  
Pass and return again—  
Moving like late summer beetles  
Against the tall brick wall.  
Must I do penance?  
And must I do penance  
For afternoons lost  
In contemplation of arrogant swans,  
For mornings spent in counting the bells,  
For evenings  
Gone while I resisted the nightingale?  
**We kneel so tall,**  
**We kneel so very straight,**  
**On the frozen ground,**  
**On the small grave.**  
So You noted and remembered  
That swift chase  
And the ultimate capture  
Under the yew tree?  
So You recorded  
The forbidden boat ride  
Under the bent willows,  
Between the steep banks?  
**Suddenly we discover with horror,**

And the fear rises like a mist,  
And the mist wraps the hooded figures,  
And the horror obscures the book of confession—  
For the ones we know are living,  
And what is this grave?  
And why are we here?  
We kneel so tall,  
We kneel so very straight,  
On the frozen ground,  
On the small grave.  
And we must do penance,  
And we must do penance  
For the race and the ride and the bird!

---

**M S S**

**Upper Class  
Material**