

Two Poems

Frances King

The Conversation

Having come to the end of a swift day,
We reviewed the past months
With something akin to surprise.
Having decided upon the general tenor of events,
We began to recount in a clever sort of way.
"First of all, there was the actual meeting
(Long after the dream had been conceived)
Which began with obvious hatred and then—"
"Then there were the long silent months
Which managed to speak very loud to them."
"The snow came in the windows and added enchantment. . . ."
"Not snow, but blossoms."
"Classrooms faded into books, into talk,
Into suspension of talk."
"Spring alternated with a December feeling of uncertainty.
Violets and red but fallen,
Drifts of color and fragility."
"The dignity of moonlight altered them,
Causing them to assume an honesty seldom perceived."
Having examined the situation at a glance,
We leaned back in a graceful terminating way,
But a third shadow joined the discussion,
And we both sighed as we saw it was going to finish
the story.
"Naturally the snow and the talk and the bells
Which chimed and chimed in their minds
Was not strong enough.
Pride and freedom joined them near the corner
One June night."
Here we shook our clever heads and begged
That the story be ended and goodbyes said.
But the shadow smiled and stretched
And continued the story they didn't want to hear.

"So the four of them were an unfortunate crowd,
 And one said this in his mind,
 And the other said it in his actions.
 'And then there were none?'
 And they gradually perceived that June
 Had been November; and the fog, smoke;
 And the moonlight, fire which burned them;
 And the talk, sword play; and the promises, denials."
At this point the third shadow paused
And looked around for the original two.
 Seeing that they were vanishing through the door,
 The shadow followed them and shouted down the hall.
 "So you see it is the old fable of evolution
 In which nothing is what it seems.
 The sunsets, too, are hallucinations,
 And the stars will go soon,
 And you are not the two who entered here."
 Having shook their heads in a knowing sort of way,
 The original two discovered under a street light
 That they were looking into the faces of past enemies.

For a Small Child

How can I tell you that the enchantment is rare,
 Seldom to be found.
 Tell you, **you** standing there with the cut forsythia,
 Standing with your calm and sensitive eyes
 Seeking assurance?
 Is it possible to explain that sudden knowing
 Of the singular scattered whirlpools in each life?
 The time when one sees the few highlighted
 Moments in the usual calm, dull cove of existence
 The scarce gulls snatched from the spray
 Or lost and seen far off
 Glimmering still in the receding surf
 Can I show, as it in me, to teach
 The importance of those flowers,
 (Their confident gold swirling about your happy face)
 The deathless existence of each chosen thing
 Plucked from an envious wind
 Which lies in wait?