

The Fear

by One Who Does Not Know It

"Oh, fucking, fuckity fuck, my life, you see, it totally sucks!"
The overhanging party-goer fixed me with a gruesome stare
And every nerve and every neuron screamed at me "beware! beware!"
But now my eyes were double-glazed, and rigor mortis setting in;
The party-goer drew a breath, and did his deadly tale begin...
"It was the flat-warming" he croaked, "of this old friend of mine from school;
"For twenty years I'd only seen him one in seven, as a rule,
"And hardly knew him; still, it seemed, the best thing was to go along,
"For few friends made it this far North, and I was up for wine and song;
"And women too? High hopes? Hi-ho, it's off to work them I did go
"And there my error had its root, and there began my tale of woe!
"'Aut disce', they say, 'aut discede,' but far wiser heads than mine
"Added 'manet sors tertia: caedi!', and I was hooked by the third line.
"No sooner did I find the place, and take my gloves off, and my coat
"(Where is the summer of the south?) Then on my waking senses smote...
"Ach, you can guess what I beheld, your brain is wired the same as mine
"If you are male, or if you're not, you know how stupid men repine:
"It's almost always the same story, la vieille histoire d'amour,
"Les yeux qui brillent, les l'èbres qui encadrent la voix charmante de velours.
"Qui peut se battre, qui gagner, contre ces charmes éternels?
"Not I, not against her, forsooth!" (y'see? it's fucked my verse as well!)
(And here the poor guy trembled, stopped, and leaned a moment on the wall,
And I began to wonder if I'd ever get to work at all)
"She was", he said, "she was... not much, at least, not just then, in the hall"
"A fleeting smile on its way from lounge to kitchen, that was all"
"I went in, said hello, got drunk" (I interjected, "got a drink?")
He countered "It's my bloody story; I know what I did... I think."
"I can't remember who I talked to, half the evening is a blur,
"Till, fumbling blindside for a crisp, I took a hand instead; 'twas her.
"The usual girl-and-geek exchange ensued: one cool, the other damp
"One fighting fear and fantasy, the other thinking "what a tramp!"
"Or so we imagine; in fact, she's thinking nothing of the sort
"For her, unlike us, it just ain't a matter of such high import.
"In fact, it wasn't all that bad; she smiled at once, and even laughed
"At a lame joke I won't repeat (oh, how our hormones make us shaft
"Ourselves socially! How did mankind evolve thus? it makes no sense!
"Without womankindness we'd never make it over the first fence);
"Then, just as I began to think the evening worth it after all,
"I perpetrated (fool!) the sin that precipitated The Fall.
"(I nearly said 'original', but it was anything but that.
"Oh, god. And now, and now..." "The Fear?" I asked. He nodded, dumbly sat
Down on the kerb, head held in hands, gently moaning, his tale half told,
But archetypes aren't hard to guess, and half ghosts still make me sweat cold.
I left him there; he said himself, "There is no cure for such as I
"But time, distraction, sleep and luck", and as I left I heard him sigh
"Oh, fucking, fuckity fuck, my life, you see, it totally sucks!"

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