

Liking in "The Scarlet Letter"

by Bill Yarrow

like a flame that sinks down among the late decaying embers
like a floating sea-bird on the long heaves and swells of sound
like the phantasmagoric play of the northern lights

like an uprooted weed that lies wilting in the sun
like a black shadow emerging into sunshine
like ether out of a phial

like a tuft of green moss on a crumbling wall
like a rough blow upon an ulcerated wound
like the stroke of sudden death

like the dome of an immense lamp
like blades of grass at the sweep of the scythe
like a line of cliffs against a tempestuous tide

like a shapeless piece of driftwood tossed ashore
 with the initials of a name upon it
like the voice of a young child that was spending its infancy
 without playfulness
like a ghost that revisits the familiar fireside and can no longer
 make itself seen or felt
like a man taken by surprise in a mood to which he was reluctant
 to have witnesses
like a glimmering light that comes we know not whence
 and goes we know not whither

like the first encounter in the world beyond the grave of two spirits
 who had been intimately connected in their former life but now
 stood coldly shuddering in mutual dread as not yet familiar with

their state nor wanted to the companionship of disembodied
beings

like the convulsive throes of the cholera
like the frozen calmness of a dead woman's features
like one awakening, all nerveless, from an ugly dream

like a young deer
like fading sunshine
like a red flame in the dark

like truth
like a dream
like human language

