

Raymond Chandler and His Wife

by Bill Yarrow

I.

One day it was boring
to be alive. The magic
had vanished in a mist
of dead wives. The smoke
of death's cigarette alone
had survived. Her dying
grew bitter, and smoked
in his eyes.

II.

*She was as gentle as
a slug of sweet wine,
as loving as the milky
handshake of the blind,
as knowing as the balding
barker at the fair. The sinks
and drains now hold
her hair.*

III.

They found him drunk
on the tile, his clothes
in a pile, his gun by his
mouth in a kiss, his
body listless as artifice.
Two bullets made a gaping
wound in the ceiling
of the bathroom.

IV.

*It is the autumn of my
fear of being alive and
alone. My wife who was
my candle is now death's
discolored bone. I, who
wrote six novels, am a
soft unpublished
moan.*

V.

When he woke, he screamed
for mum and checked into a
sanitarium. When he saw
what it was about, he
changed his mind and just
walked out. Arriving home,
he renewed his lease, fed his cat,
and thanked the police.

VI.

*Everyday it was boring
to be alive. The solace
had vanished in the hiss
of the mind. The smoke
of death's bourbon alone
had survived. His thoughts
shrunk to rubble, and
stoked his demise.*

