

In Quietude

by Iain James Robb

For Algernon

Afloat, on tidal difference's separated songs
Let nothing spare her mention, still belongs
That sterile tone mismissioned to my ear
What love's illusion balanced most when throngs
Of hummingbirds advanced, methinks, to hear her;
That was surely jest: I wished to hold her nearer;
Now that all is played and nearer is not near,
 She is not there.

Though she spars sunward only as magicians go
That flatter once, then separate their show
From waves of kelp we plough through when the drearer
Light of day strikes strobes; if backwards, still we go.
I think if we could careful vie to spear her
With each Lothario's or Magellan's blow,
Betwixt each winds in listing we won't hear her;
 She is not, no,

Not as the marionettes or distant playthings
Our last childhood remembered, not as rows
Of wheat the spirit assuaged on simmered day-rings,
Not as hers' millennial glimmerings on the rose.
Mere plastic she, but periplast arriving
At some river brink Narcissus hardly knows
Throws more of spastic sense on all our striving
 Than all she knows.

Alone, aghast, 'tis passed, still lovers keep
The clock-downed hours where clowning clovers sleep
Upon the diamond of the green mead's plough;

We answer thus, "Is this the same as now?"
It was the same as yesterday, we half remember;
We care not we are barbs below the bough.
Through each great lukewarm Spring, grey-white December
Her spinstering vow.

We need not strive so; go where vanes once Lydian
Calculated minutes from the breeze's veer;
By Tropic banks our fathers claimed meridian
Whatever flowers sent forth, wraith fruits, she would not wear.
White strains adorned from perfumes' drifted memory,
And gowns the Vespers ply from snowdrops' keep
She would not hold from any action's armoury,
And will not keep.

Preferring temperance to this false adorning,
To Southwards or to Northwards I will show
The face that calculates upon its lauding
More than she hers, since naught awaits below.
If calculate, let others claim emissaries
More than to my own state; I do not trow
Whether me to her, to her own gait miscarries;
We do not know.

