

SWING-SET

by Joan Stepp Smith

Soon, out of the womb 'down there' is nuance.

It guides you, like a legality, like your own breathing,
in and out of overtone, hardcore hodgepodges,
those inklings near sacrosanct beyond breakfront
negligees and neo-negligence leading the good life.
Isn't it romantic? Wasn't it morbid? Watching
the cleaning girl rush to catch his car,
her fine-boned feet skipping down the stairs, after him,
after he'd left your bed, still damp,
her trotting alongside his black Bavarian car,
you watching her tapping on his blue-tinted window,
him lowering it just a slit, just the barest invitation for her
willing fingers to enter, and like little arrows make contact
with a man who has no clue how much you'd watched his starving
girl, that pulling back of her hand from the pinch of a future
choking, that sucking on her insensible fingers, not knowing
how easily you could have taught her to tip them with poison.

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