



Dark, sweeping jets of hair, umber, wash by,  
Flanking the skyline pallor of her skin.

The stern expression merely signifies  
Mock-tragic gaiety in a girl her age.  
Pale arms of porcelain touch. A necklace lies  
Lightening her dress, whose whale-blown hoops of sky  
Fade on exposure through the whitened page.

Time caught—a dying smile, caught, revived,  
Fresh-watered in the lens, and duly shed—  
Hangs shaded, where, behind noon shutters knived  
By splintered light (whose fig-seed blaze outside  
Bleaches the yawning stones), she lies in bed.

Shrivelled, how scorched, how sun-wracked, fever-spiked!  
How winter frost has shorn this withered husk!  
How many ravelled years have liked, disliked  
This old, worn woman, many streams of light  
Have lit this trembling mind, and how much dusk?

Nodding at some sweet thought, she half retrieves  
The far, flushed sunrise, but the eyes which laugh  
Are blind, the smile which wreathes those same lips leaves  
A wasted rose. As darkness falls, she sleeps  
Alone, with a little girl in a photograph.

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