

Luxuria, Mlle

"Ces quelques pas du palier a la chambre d'Albertine, ces quelques pas que person ne ne pouvait plus arreter, je les fis avec delices, avec prudence, comme plonge dans un element nouveau, comme si en avançant j'avais lentement deplace du bonheur, et en meme temps avec un sentiment inconnu de toute-puissance, et d'entrer enfin dans un heritage qui m'eut de tout temps appartenu."*

A winter's night
the Northern Quay
the Isle of Dogs
the rabid one is me
you sip your drink
undismayed
and I just said
"These days my heart seems to be a kind of hand grenade"

Nothing in the air tugs at the tower blocks
as you raise your finger and pull the pin
nothing much on earth moves down these desolating docks
do you really think you just scratched your chin?

But you were never Albertine
and I was never poor Marcel
who were you that time round,
Mademoiselle?

Monsieur a peur du parfum des princesses

And now I act up
and you've a winning frown
I've contracted love
as I'm devoured down
blame my deadening intensity
and tell me how you got the part in this
my own illicit agony

I lay it on pretty thick
you spread yourself pretty thin
ducking and dividing under every skin
and my final words as you get up and leave
"if you're free as air, I don't want to breathe"

Good evening,
I am the madman in love with your daughter
we need to talk
just you and me
I saw her last in Eden
or some other Far Eastern quarter
where the river snakes its way out to sea

But you were never Albertine
and I was never poor Marcel
who were you that time round,
Mademoiselle?

* Marcel Proust - A L'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs

Those few steps from the landing to Albertine's door,
those few steps which no one now could prevent my
taking, I took with delight, with prudence, as though
plunged into a new and strange element, as if in going
forward I had been gently displacing the liquid stream
of happiness, and at the same time with a strange feeling

of absolute power, and of entering at length into an inheritance which had belonged to me from all time.

Translated by C K Scott Moncrieff