

WILD AS OPHELIA

Your husband dropped by with some papers to sign,
saw me naked on your stairs,
you were drowsing in that candy-striped slip you'd wear.
If a genie rose up from my coffee cup
on a pillar of steam to grant three wishes I'd say
let there be a Heaven and just the way you described it.
You're like a ghost left behind
in that empty old house
and I raised the tattered flag of surrender.
Dawn crept over the Brow,
last night's wine stale in the bottle

We both knew growing up was just a trap,
we came from places just a crease in the map,
already halfway to hell on the good ship Lollipop.
You'd punch a pill from a blister-pack,
swallow it down with the whiskey you'd keep
and the wind shook the moon from a tree outside your window.
You'd reminisce about the dancehalls you'd haunt as a girl,
the men and the music, the magic
and so many good times gone.
Your smile flickered on
like a flame in some dark lonely chapel ...

Now I'm out alone on a moonless night,
I'm thinking of you singing your songs,
and watching timer-lights blinking on all over the valley.
I see you wild as Ophelia or a Bronte girl,
a nightingale with a broken wing
keeping watch through the long small hours.
From across the pillow you'd laugh at your life,
we'd open a window to listen to the storm kick the world about.
Why'd you have to slip away that night when I wasn't looking?

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