from the Primal Curse (Toronto, c. 1890), p. 312.


8Skene, *Medical Gynecology*, pp. 80, 82.


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**ALISON HOPWOOD**

**Breakfast table**

Too familiar to notice or think of the table has its everyday look: butter is yellow, marmalade orange, creamy brown coffee steams in its mug. Slices of bread lie in their basket between a vase of flowers from the garden and the bright rectangular toaster.

Pushed the toaster lever goes down but inside the firm solid shape some connection is not made black wires stay black shining metal stays cold gives no clue to the breakdown between yesterday and today.

Changed and changing the flowers look different funnels of lemon lily are twisted shut bright poppies lie flat open pale rose heads hang heavy stem leaf petal are intricate and various.

Buds are arrayed from stalk-green to flower-yellow orange saucers show off constellations of pollen-tipped stamens around swelling pistils almost-grey sepals point back to dark-green serrated leaves Day lily Welsh poppy white rose invite consideration.

**Strategies**

The heron stands in the small pool watching for frog or fish wary of us.

We sit on a lot waiting too our picnic lunch will not escape.

Cautious we move hands to eat.

| he was telling me lies  
| he said he had a brother-in-law  
| who was a professor of art  
| or mathematics, maybe  
| psychology or philosophy  
| whose name he did not know  
| he said he had a friend named 'Joe'  
| he said his family ran a gallery  
| where only family work was shown  
| every member was an artist  
| and had been since the Renaissance  
| but always, yes, always  
| they had to work to live  
| he said this gallery was in London  
| I tried to map it in my mind  
| I wanted to get away  
| I wanted to sip my champagne  
| but could not bring the glass  
| up to my face, over to my lips  
| unless I could look  
| and know that it was still held in my hand  
| I wanted to turn my head  
| but it would not move  
| and I could not move  
| I stared  
| I could no longer  
| understand what he said  
| I could no longer  
| hear him  
| I said pardon  
| I said pardon  
| I thought I must be reading his lips  
| I was not looking at his lips  
| it was his eyes  
| they were talking  
| I thought he was insane  
| yet he must be skillful  
| to keep me there  
| in stillness  
| in a trance  
| as he transmitted  
| telepathic lies  
| to me |

The heron flies off

Rain pockmarks the grey lagoon white swans ride steady

With coats buttoned hands gloved we walk briskly

Rain comes down harder we leave the park head for shelter

The white feathers shine on the dark water

The snail retreats into its shell the butterfly fits elusive out of reach the bee stings the intruder

Lacking shell or wings born weaponless we think about survival

**LORRAINE WHELAN**

at the opening

he breathed the air in  
and never let it go  
his hand against his chest  
his body expanding weird  
the wool of his sweater  
got caught in my eye  
I was mesmerized  
no — hypnotized  
he said his name was Jacob  
and I searched  
for some significance  
but momentarily  
lost my memory  
of everything but the blue  
 glaring circles  
on his face  
he was telling me stories  