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THE WHITE QUEEN SOLILOQUY

by Lala Heine-Koehn

A trumpet wakes her from her sleep.
The long wailing notes disturb the heavy
folds of her bed curtains; the lace on
her pillows flutters like wings
of a bird in flight.

The staccato beat of hooves against
stone, the sputter and snort of reined
horses drifts in from the outside.

On each horse, on black, one white,
a knight is sitting, his raised lance
piercing the dawn; black on white,
white on black, the square flagstones
pave the court.

She knows the pattern by heart.

The stables boys in grey garb resemble
sparrows; herd together under the turrets.
Pointed shadows reach like fingers
touching her windows..

All are waiting to greet the master.

She has a white lamb tied to her bed
post, a long pink ribbon knotted
around its neck. It walks to and fro,
as far as the ribbon allows.

Open the door, she orders the lamb.

Obediently it walks toward it,
stretching the ribbon taut, nuzzles
the door handle, swinging it open.

Three men come in, each one carrying
a pheasant on a silver platter, their twisting
beaks and wings tied with red ribbons.

They arrange the birds on her bed,
then disappear on silent feet.

Avoiding their eyes, she begins to pluck
the birds, placing the feathers one by one
upon her coverlet.

Open the window, she orders the lamb.

In her bare feet she walks toward it,
tossing the feathers into the breeze.

They flutter, float, spiralling in the early
mist. She picks up the birds.

With gentle fingers she tightens
their knotted ribbons, sit them upon
the stone breastwall, pointing their beaks
toward the meadows and woods.

Fly my lovelies, fly she whispers,
pushing a silver arrow into her hair,
coiling her plans around it.

She too is ready to greet her master.