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Her World at 53

Dan Schwarz

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Her World at 53

Dan Schwarz

I.

She lives in her thoughts alone,
greying and pale at fifty-three,
rearranging mental furniture,
dusting dowdy slipcovers,
tidying drawing rooms
of her small experiences,
polishing woodwork of occasional bliss,
staring at boudoir bedspread,
quilted with disappointments,
she savors dregs of travels past,
smiling as she counted the cost,
recounted passing interludes of passion,
brief affairs, cold nights
with partially enabled married men;
she rehearses conversations
borrowing wisdom, bromides,
from discoveries made
decades ago in imagined worlds.

No peacock she,
costumed performatively,
feathers furled—
rather brown wren,
dressing for function,
never quite right.
Her little hands and face,
her nervous darting walk,
bespeak fastidious temperament,
alternating with fatigue.
She has gentleness of
still summer nights.
But she speaks in monotone
as if her world
were a faculty meeting,
I a colleague.