

# The Purple Scarf



1.

They were  
    going to the ballet  
        a recent work  
by a favored  
    choreographer,-  
"it will be  
    an exciting evening"  
    they were told  
"and be sure to come  
    well in advance  
                of the curtain  
for a glass of wine  
    and something to eat"

He had seen Lorraine  
        first  
at one of the  
new bars on Third Street  
She had

come in alone  
and sat at a  
    table by the door  
glancing anxiously  
expecting  
her friend to arrive

After awhile  
she just sat quietly  
& watched the rain  
    drizzle down the windows

He had not  
    the courage  
to approach her then  
    a woman alone in a bar

He went on  
reading his book  
and  
when he  
    looked up  
    she was gone  
"Wasn't it  
your own projection?"  
    he thought to himself  
    and then  
                left the bar  
walking

close to the store fronts  
to avoid the rain

2.

the rain was  
    beating down heavily  
on the clear plastic awning  
she stood beneath  
and almost in chorus  
    occasionally  
stomp her boot heels  
                    and cough  
the waiter  
    came up to her  
and asked  
    if she wanted  
                    a table  
that would be nice  
                    she said  
Inside  
    the music of the rain  
                            was just background  
a Sunday morning  
    only  
    a few other customers . . . .  
There was the  
    occasional  
    clink of glasses

and clatter of plates . . . .

she sat  
at a table by the window  
where the waiter  
placed  
a glass of ice water  
on the white linen  
table cloth  
and took her order  
The rain  
was  
driven at a slant  
across  
the front of the windows  
and there was  
a feeling of comfort  
and of being safely enclosed

3.

Rusty performed on the bass  
is all I knew  
he had  
large hands  
that thumped  
against the  
thick adjoining strings  
of the instrument he played

"She's looking at you"  
he said to me once  
referring  
to the woman  
                                sitting  
on the other side  
                                of the fountain

She wore  
a thin white blouse  
and white trousers  
and a purple scarf  
that tied up the ends  
of her long black hair

she was reading  
"The Flowers of Evil"  
and would  
glance over  
in our direction  
before turning a page

"I got to go," he said

"Are you opening tonight"  
                                I asked him?

"That's me," he said  
"Then you

then comes Taylor."

I knew nothing  
of women  
at the time  
They were as  
personal to me  
as trees in the park.

now Rusty,  
he was a ladies' man  
and  
to be a friend  
let me know  
what was going on

I felt that I was now  
intimate with this woman  
who was  
twenty yards away  
sitting alone  
and reading Baudelaire

after awhile  
she became  
impatient with my shyness  
and left abruptly

she shook her head

so that her purple scarf  
became entangled  
with the breeze  
and fell away

end

