

Nursing History

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Soignant l'histoire/l'histoire de l'infirmière

Ce texte, tiré d'un film Nursing History, met en jeu le travail déconstructif de la mémoire, une répétition des événements du passé d'une femme, qui vise à rompre avec la répétition ritualisée de ces événements dans des performances ou des cérémonies, tels le mariage ou la collation de grade de l'infirmière, les deux superposés, des rites où l'on devient femme vouée à se soumettre aux besoins des autres.

They were moving on toward a resolution of something that had been started for them centuries before

What did you know about this past except that it didn't have anything to do with this your most important day



They spent hours getting ready everything had to be co-ordinated, even your underpants were white and of course new a gift carefully wrapped untouched for the first time in that life position

You smiled alot and seemed to walk more confidently after it was over

But maybe she thought this was due to the time spent waiting silently still while others went before you

It wasn't clear in her mind
but anyway
it didn't matter – you were just relieved
it was over
So much time spent preparing,
making sure everything
was right
only to be anxious for it all to be finished
You weren't used to all this attention
and frankly
it made you a bit embarrassed
and do funny things
– maybe she didn't really know how to act
It was hard to keep everything under control
but she was there to help you
Passing between these two men
you caught yourself in a moment of aloneness
– looking at yourself, looking at yourself
avoiding the familiar reflection
of their familial gaze
Suspended in time and space
it was unfamiliar
it was cool,
damp flowing hot green steamy solitude –
nothingness but you
You remember that moment (at times)
but afterwards there's too much to do to
remember well,
to rehearse that moment so it burns
– in your mind
She has trouble recalling that essence
and nothing around her now
seems anywhere near it
or capable of refreshing – her mind
You find that moment full of dangerous pleasure
alone with you
with a presence you can't define
– that frightens her
and she reaches out
to what life is serving her next
and realises that,
maybe she has an appetite for it after all

She smiles again
automatically
remembering
for that moment
what she must
do
and offers herself
to be kissed,
to be touched,
to be looked at
– this is not dangerous
– this is safe
– this is familiar



You are home at last with
your quiet softness of
exhaustion your heart
regaining its normal
rhythm

cooling down your passion

You walk toward a future that your past
has thoroughly predicted
and yet you feel you
are entering a new world and
somehow you manage to make it work

And she keeps trying
to get it right

It looks perfect
and everyone follows you
with their eyes
with their hearts
for this most public
private moment



And they all watch for the same thing – not knowing what lies beyond
this image, underneath its two dimensions, and beyond its static
frame Lies that have made them know what they see is real – you can
see it for yourself can't you – lies that make them realise it is real

We rely on these images not to confirm our suspicions but to lay them
to rest firmly, flatly once and for all

But her suspicions
come back now
and I know them
and they are coming
with a ferocity
she can no longer
control or ignore

more often



She looks back
at the past
to see

where these suspicions came from
or if she ever learned anything
that would help her understand

But history
tells her

wrong

she is

even in the face of my knowable
and real experiences

She looks back at a uniform past
in the face of a fragmented presence
there is fear terror and fury

She tries to sleep
but it's too noisy
and she thinks the sun is shining
she sleeps unevenly
– disturbed rest –

she wakes up short of breath
short of breath and
hears her heart
pound



Lying in perfect pain she
dreams herself awake
and there is something
glowing beneath the surface

It has been there for centuries