

Dawson Hardy

Before the Murder

Let us celebrate that little sadness
For what's been lost
When the spaces and residences
You remember
And wish you could visit, revisit,
Are gone.

Childhood is often the biggest little sadness.
Sisters that revel in their smug bitterness, and
Brothers that bloom with hateful actions and spite
Inspire conspiratorial planning and violence.

Your brothers, George and Owen,
Would laugh and sing; sing songs at you
As they laughed at you. Even Brenda, your dear sister,
Once your dear friend and confidant, cackles at insults.

Your moments of peace were forever under scrutiny.
Always they forced a needling word, a manipulative jibe.

And when opportunity did not knock, you built a door.
You ran through its threshold with the woman you loved.
Your inheritance pocketed. You left home for good. The end.

But soon the woman left. The money spent.
And when every dark possibility absconded,
You returned contritely to Tredannick Wollas.

Family can always be trusted to welcome home those lost
To adventure with laughter. They knew you would be back.
Failed again. "It's the common story," Owen says to George.
"You can give money to a fool but that doesn't make him less a fool."

"Money makes the pocket fatter but the fool poorer," says George.
If you were stronger, you would crack open their skulls.
If you were a different kind of person, you'd have stood up
To them all. Even Brenda laughed, how dare she laugh!

So you left again, bags in hand and walked to the vicarage.
You took rooms with Roundhay and plotted a subtle revenge.

You would do something. You would get your own back again.
But the icy fear of being found out was hideous, immobilizing.

You would have to catch them unawares. And in their moment
Of subtle weakness spring your plan. For years you wondered,

How?

As the soft moments of sleep were broken, you wake to stones
Thrown at the vicarage window. Sterndale is outside raging.

When Sterndale gets inside he clasped you by the neck.
Sterndale claims revenge and pushed you towards the glowing
Lamp. He speaks of true love dying, but how was he here? Now?

You inhale the smoke,
Began to hallucinate,
And then scream out.

In the last moments you recall that toyshop
The one in the village with the rocking horse
And all those toy soldiers you could never own.

Just look upon them as little sadnesses, as a dream
Of gallant colorful celebrations that are now gone.