

Tom Beckett



Another Shadow?

ungovernable press
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cover image found online. photographer unknown

For Nicholas Manning

“Should we exorcize another shadow?”
--Michel Serres (from *The Five Senses*)

To be
is to be
received.
And *veiled.*

(Separated
at birth.)

Breathe.

A telephone
is ringing
(no, it's not).

The reach
of a voice
is its timbre.

To do
is to
perceive.
(If one
is lucky.)

Before becoming
a butterfly
the caterpillar
liquefies
inside a chrysalis.

No one,
nobody
really understands
what happens
during metamorphosis.

A telephone
is ringing.

A hologram
is singing.

(Actually, neither
thing's true.)

The Ventriloquist's
shadow
is speaking
to me.

(My senses
of self
have never
coincided
with my body.)

The Ventriloquist's
shadow
is fucking
with me.

Every t-h-i-n-g
is unstable.

Every recognition
is reconstituted

as some-
thing else.

I am
slipping away,

being slipped
into by

the Ventriloquist's
potent shadow.

Is one's
body the
possibility of
a chrysalis?

I want
to be-

come some-
thing else.

*To be
you, the*

*act
of love.*

Sometimes
emphasis
is
metamorphosis.

Sometimes
ecstasy
is
the
rule.

I've never
trusted myself,
so is
that now
what I
must do?

Nothing follows.

I love
this
imperfect house.

The problem
with
my body...

When
I lost
the ability
to write
I
kept writing.

There's a
grammar of
~~enunciation~~renunciation, a
syntax in
the way of
the way
one moves
one's mouth
in the
sex dream.

In the
sex dream
the Ventriloquist
is swollen
and on
the verge
of expelling
his shadows
(into me).

In the
sex dream
there is
a theater
or what
remains of
a theater.
It might
be a
thought balloon
filled with
empty risers
fronted by
a proscenium,

curtain drawn
behind it.

Are interruptions
the sinews,
the synapses
of poetry?

In
the fever dream
your face
is a mirror.

Narcissus
or Medusa?

The world
is all
that fills
your face.
(That's not
true, either.
Is it?)

The world
is chrysalis?

The word
"entranced" fascinated
the Ventriloquist.
(Being under
a spell
equaling having
been entered.)

The word
is
surely chrysalis.

Skin is
what my
grandmother used
to call
“reading material.”

Everything
is enclosed
(in yearning).

Sex is
a text
(in Braille
and Martian).