

THE LAST DAYS

The Wallachian Prince? O yes very likely
she said and slammed the door in his face.

Later five or six were seated at the Café
Riche under the falling clustered acacia.
When they left the bill was not paid.

Desperate he remembered a room full
of light, his mother shining at the edge
saying look an oriole and he looked
but of course outside the window she said.

INTRODUCTION

Across the yard, Lucy's mother made beaded lamp
shades for headboards. Her father was always mean.
The lamp shades had cottage scenes.

And once at the lake I saw the mother. A thin man-boy
had her against the side of a cottage. They did it
standing up.
Returned home I saw her out back, staring at the river.
"Don't say ya seen me at the lake," she said.

WE TRAVEL A CONTOUR MAP

Yesterday I remembered hope. Changes come.

As when a man, much moved by mass, comes out of church,
stubs his toe oops ouch swears laughs.

Or when he came out and on the way for the paper discovered
he'd put a five in the plate not a one. He started to go
back, explain, stopped. "I gave it to God the hell with it."

-- Ellen Tifft

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