



*scurrilous toy*

SHANNA COMPTON

## THE DEBUTANTE

There she is  
arranged for public  
inspection

She's gratefully refused  
stuffed whittled curled  
poofed painted encased  
enlarged enhanced plucked  
tightened covered colored-in  
& denied knowing anything about

Her so-called sacrifices  
have been considerable,  
a punishment with which  
she titillates herself

Oh fantasy reward!

The grand permission  
she sought has turned out  
to be a rather tepid  
approval

& the expectation  
that she keep it up  
practically forever

## PRUNING OF THE SHRUBBY

Think of growing the funny little things  
in your own garden from seed  
Find & love an unpretentious patch

A pinkish variety is known as  
the maiden's blush

If your aim is ornamental,  
ostentatious but without poison  
she may be slipped  
until she is tall & decorative

Likewise a gift of old growth  
in water or sand  
she may be coaxed to give off  
the heady scent of roses

A balm with hairy leaves  
Yellow, variegated  
Nutmeg or apple-scented  
Large, dark green, velvety  
A true fingerbowl geranium

Her feathery foliage spreads rapidly  
She is very white & woolly

Better known as sweet asylum

## THE BLUE ONE WITH THE TAIL

Tentatively & brave  
to be examined  
she's standing  
over to the left

She's done this so  
many times but

her recollection's  
scratched out  
or kind of faded

It's just kind of floating there

She's painted her toenails  
& framed them  
in a strappy sandal  
with a tall stacked heel

What kind of animal  
has a tail with stripes  
like that?

She's reached out  
but never touched it

## THE MORE LENIENT PERSONALS

Soft,  
pink  
& forlorn  
is how we like them best

No trouble  
to clutch

Only a few little irritants  
(& those should be marginally  
adorable)

Dependability  
is good  
like a bonus of 3 extra ozs.  
in a bottle of shampoo

(There's always more where)

Sure—a fellow  
can dream  
of magnetic, fluid, beastly, cursive, yelpmouthed, heckling, unfolded,  
accelerated, improbable, opaque, wayward, damp, grieving willingnesses  
who are all forgiveness,

so go ahead & call

It comes with its feet  
already shaped like that

## HEADLESS FEMALE TORSO

In violet light  
she rises  
to a tart  
peach drapery.

Cashes in  
the sleepy hours  
for something readier  
in quicker gold.

She fills out  
another set of cards.

She scans the blue  
books along the shelf  
& chooses a thick one.

Opens it  
anywhere  
to find the subtle  
bubbles of her thoughts  
bursting with noiseless pops  
& a little spittle.

First, we'll drown.  
Then the ice will come.

Endless sheets  
of white ice  
reaching to cover her  
consoling roundness.

## THE OFFICES OF WOMEN

Think of her  
as kindling

informed by light  
such

that it collects  
at her bright tips.

Come under  
the power of

her example:  
the necessity of abandon

a theme of memory  
& spiritual comeliness

a blandishment  
to which none can hold

all ladies

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