

"WHEN EVERYTHING THAT TICKED HAS STOPPED"...Emily Dickinson

This stark cubicle stays closed,
No green grows; only the walls
Are tender. Your prodding finger knows—
But found no entry,
No valve for compressed dark to drain.

The machinery is jammed with black.
One only who could repair my brain
Suffocated in the crumbled cell block
Of my soul.

This cold crucible stays filled:
Refined slag, a purity of dross—
Your hopeful hands bruise
And now they smell of losing.
On your way home, gather all
The dying anodynes from my old garden.

THE SOCIETY BLURB SAID "TYCOON ENTERTAINS JR. EXEC & SOUTHERN BRIDE"

Gold shouldered, satsuma-sheen pasted on my mouth,
 A roll of wit under my tongue, I confront smiling lies
 In crystal & silver, haloed with his gimmicked colored rays,
 His paternal/satyr beaming. You programmed me so
 I fill my dialogue balloons like prescriptions &
 Send them up, open my sequined centerfold, fan warm Chanel,
 Try not to gag on escargot.
 Pious dimples & cloven hoofs, frail-foiled with wife & wares,
 He wants me to know how he loves classical music, how fluent
 his French.

We sit orchestrated, smoke-haired, blue-toothed. The napkins
 Fluoresce. You & she sit silent, gone dark. His.
 His voice collides with my mind like sticky stucco, his
 Expensive scent is an affront to greenness.
 Oh, to be back with peach groves & my old upright Steinway—
 Barefoot on the back porch cleaning bream—watching
 My father's hands at the potter's wheel through a spray of scales—
 Turning to bubbles of contrived light
 Bouncing on your boss & me while you are dusk.
 He asks me to call him Andrew & surrounds my hand with money clips.
 I am being shaped on a wheel not even by you. Coiling. Spinning.
 Turning me toward a dim martini sun.
 Will you light up if I tell him to go to hell? Will
 Your eyes come on if I brandy my cockles & hackles &
 Wind into his design?