

## 2.

now two old ladies sit peacefully knitting,  
and their names are sometimes and always

“i can’t understand what life could have seen in him” stitch  
-counting always severely remarks;and her sister(suppress-  
ing a yawn)counters “o i don’t know;death’s rather attractive”  
—“attractive!why how can you say such a thing?when i think  
of my poor dear husband”—“now don’t be absurd:what i said was  
‘rather attractive’,my dear;and you know very well that  
never was very much more than attractive,never was

stunning”(a crash. Both jump)“good  
heavens!” always exclaims “what  
was that?”—“well here comes your daughter”  
soothes sometimes;at which

death’s pretty young wife enters;wringing her hands,and wailing  
“that terrible child!”—“what”(sometimes and always together  
cry)“now?”—“my doll:my beautiful doll;the very  
first doll you gave me,mother(when i could scarcely  
walk)with the eyes that opened and shut(you remember:  
don’t you,auntie;we called her love)and i’ve treasured  
her all these years,and today i went through a closet  
looking for something;and opened a box,and there she  
lay:and when he saw her,he begged me to let him  
hold her;just once:and i told him ‘mankind,be careful;  
she’s terribly fragile:don’t break her,or mother’ll be angry’ ”

and then(except for  
the clicking of needles)there was silence