

HELGA'S WYETH

People buzz over these nudes
 like bees poised over poppies.

 The nude is languid in her
 power, and they sigh for that.

 "crown of Flowers" he called
 it, my serendipity of myrtle

 strung in the mystic circle.
 that means the death of innocence:

 its beauty and intensity brief
 as baby's breath. He wants

 to be at one with whoever she
 is, Flora or Nature or the Mother

 of Ten Thousand Breasts, but he

 does not wish to die. I wear

 more than the mystery; I bare
 more than this flesh. I bear

 witness. "Braids" means order
 to me, an interlacing of old

 knowledge and new; he means it
 to mean melancholy, dead passion

twined with leaden threads. He
 has lost the hope of happiness.

 'Barracoon' is my turning away
 from his needs; my turning

 to the death of his heart.
 He painted hooks over my

 pallet; he turned sinister
 behind my back. So I stood

 silent as the Muse; I moved
 sad as the March sky away

 from his windows. What has
 he gained? He'll frame

 the snow and isolation,

 those stray hairs tangled

 with light. He's devout
 within the limits of his craft,

 each picture the portrait
 of a man who saw more pure

 art in one woman's pulse
 than he had skill to master.

B.A. St. Andrews



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