

Tregenza Roach

THE KINGDOM OF CLOTH



The old house
which conceals
from sunlight
a negligible portion
of an English acre
has waged battle
with every manner
of the elements,
and is ready to fall.
It makes promises
to the ground
on each good day
of a grand reunion
some morning soon.

It will be wondrous
that glad sunrise
when the resting
shall come to pass,
when wood, tinnen,
shingle and nail
shall crash down,
the final splendor
to long journey
where the earth
shall take them
just so that
they might return
to face in glory
another good life.

But despite
all her promises,
the old maiden
just can't seem
to bring herself
to final curtain,
to take at last
the quiet fall.
She holds out
with purpose
for her regent,
for blessed Iona,
Bethel's fair daughter
who came down
from blue sky
to be its first
and humble queen.

Once this province
was the kingdom
of all fabric,
a place of creation,
where wild organza
and garish madras
shared secrets
with voile and
simple cotton
and the extravagant
crepe de chine,
where elegant thread
and buttons born
in luminous shells
from sea bottom
each waited in turn
upon her grace.

The old house
bows down now,
this vacant palace
built on a patch
of volcanic ground
in the spread
of the lonely
jagged mountain
named for misery

and with its shroud
made up of the fog
which did keep
its company
all the beautiful day
and every night,
while its queen
kept her reign
by lamplight.

Make haste Iona,
find your way
by Carib ocean,
to offer the kingdom
one final command.
The old house
it is long weary,
so much memory
a burden to keep.
Grant it now
your permission
for sunlight
again to warm
the hidden ground,
for green grass
to come again,
for earth to prosper
with the worth
of the cleansing rain.

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By: Tregenza Roach

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