**From Vivienne to her Tom** *by Helen Cook*

If only you would come.

My smile gathers dust like

flowers in an empty room.

I dream of

your shadow falling crooked

across my bed

as on a broken wall

my tall American Prince

your voice deep and thrilling muffled

by the fog inside my head

that fights for reason like

crow on dead crow.

Please take a seat

although it is scraped

and tell me

in your drifting way

of things I have passed.

I love to watch your hands

darting in conversation

your eyes that waver from my face

as you speak to one behind me.

Look around

do you like what you see?

Shadows mist the twist of

your poet’s mouth

that once spilled

honeyed words for me and me alone

but is muted now.

Your absence reveals the arid plains

of a sand-strewn heart.

For I am one who knows life

is a hurried walk in the dark

and you, dearest, have travelled a separate path.

And when I have whimpered my last sigh

will you be there at the throwing of clod

placing of lillies on a rainy afternoon

wrapped tightly in

your Church’s appeasement?

Will you take care that the words on stone

are true?

Go now your visit made

but promise a return.

Departures pinch me.

In this mad house I am numb

my life a hollow carcass

dried stripped bare.

If only you would come

to me your wife-

a child scratching at your door.