

The Karoo – the Summerfield House

Patricia G. Maritz¹

Where the wild mustard and dandelion dream
green and taciturn,
is the forlorn place and an echoing room of fancy.
Quietly opening and shutting doors release
scene upon scene of
wallpaper falling away
in strips of pale flowers,
inlaid roses in milky glass windows,
oil lamps violet and amber
in tarnished glass mirrors...

There, long shadows like misshaped scarecrows
glide along the walls,
half-forgotten forms
fitting indistinctly by,
bearing stacks of sheets
warm from the press of a coal-heated iron.

In the chamber of mauve taffeta,
crystal and camphor,
white enamel pails gleam,
damask and yellow rose petals curl,
and like loosening tresses fall

into a drawer of gladiolus lace lying
ethereal and unconfiding,
as a prism's refracting light
shines saffron among its folds.

Figures defined by the dark,
softened by the sympathetic light,
rest open-mouthed on the pink *chaise longue*;
in the cold moon's glance
frosty stones and arid flats lie bleak and inhospitable;
a bouquet of fleece, feed and lanoline
lingers on the air ...

In the interval between
the sighing and surging of
the windmill,
between the shifting pepper tree
and the fall of night,
sound the whirling wheels of a distant
train hurrying through the dark.



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Affiliation: ¹Department of Philosophy, University of Zululand, South Africa

Email: patricia.maritz@gmail.com

Postal address: Private Bag X1001, KwaDlangezwa 3886, South Africa

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