

Last Words to Miriam

By D. H. Lawrence

Yours is the shame and sorrow
But the disgrace is mine;
Your love was dark and thorough,
Mine was the love of the sun for a flower
He creates with his shine.

I was diligent to explore you,
Blossom you stalk by stalk,
Till my fire of creation bore you
Shrivelling down in the final dour
Anguish—then I suffered a balk.

I knew your pain, and it broke
My fine, craftsman's nerve;
Your body quailed at my stroke,
And my courage failed to give you the last
Fine torture you did deserve.

You are shapely, you are adorned,
But opaque and dull in the flesh,
Who, had I but pierced with the thorned
Fire-threshing anguish, were fused and cast
In a lovely illumined mesh.

Like a painted window: the best
Suffering burnt through your flesh,
Undressed it and left it blest
With a quivering sweet wisdom of grace: but now
Who shall take you afresh?

Now who will burn you free,
From your body's terrors and dross,
Since the fire has failed in me?
What man will stoop in your flesh to plough
The shrieking cross?

A mute, nearly beautiful thing
Is your face, that fills me with shame
As I see it hardening,
Warping the perfect image of God,
And darkening my eternal fame.