

The Tunnel

By Evelyn Scott

I have made you a child in the womb,
Holding you in sweet and final darkness.
All day as I walk out
I carry you about,
I guard you close in secret where
Cold eyed people cannot stare.

I am melted in the warm dear fire,
Lover and mother in the same desire.
Yet I am afraid of your eyes
And their possible surprise.
Would you be angry if I let you know
That I carried you so?

I could kiss you to death
Hoping that, your protest obliterated,
You would be
Utterly me.
Yet I know—how well!— Like a shell,
Hollow and echoing,
Death would be,

With a roar of the past
Like the roar of the sea.
And what is lifeless I cannot kill!
So you would make death work your will.

In most intimate touch we meet,
Lip to lip,
Breast to breast,
Sweet.
Suddenly we draw apart
And start.
Like strangers surprised at a road's turning
We see,
I, the naked you;
You, the naked me.
There was something of neither of us
That covered the hours,
And we have only touched each other's bodies
Through veils of flowers.

But let us smile kindly,
Like those already dead,
On the warm flesh
And the marriage bed.