1969

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Daydreaming in History
by Randy Bush

A dart of memory, regret-tipped and ice bodied, changed to steel and flash and entered her mind, flickering past no! She relaxed, unthinking, and let her inward gaze settle, leaf-like, to the soft floor of dream. Lips moved, soundless, to the rhythm of centen­　　weenty spider, while, inside, the scarlet thread of desire sizzled wild like cannon-fuse, trailing fire, toward a face that had come to her suddenly with its smile and its frame of onyx hair, with its locks of dark midnight hair, young face, face she knew well, face with paley ghost eyes.

In the room of masks, her own hung, tilting against one fisted arm, as the Giver-of-Good-and-Evil-Knowledge spoke of this or that revolution. Inside herself again, the roof above was all of branches, and she knew this tree with its thousand sparkling blossoms, knew its stony trunk and softness of leaf and loam between its toes. Touch-no-more, it said, with absence of warm arms and of matched heart rhythms. She traced in spirit-white the sad outline of gone away smile and woke with the feel of his hand in hers.

She, part dreaming ghost and part visible, gleaming island surrounded by fifteen other islands, stood, positioned her weapons, and passed into the flame and rage of noon.

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The bullets dance, gravely greeting, A soldier’s foe, a last chance fleeting. The jagged pieces of shrapnel fly, toward tender youths, afraid to cry. Bombs explode! they always do, The noise becomes part of you. The test he asks them, “Is it past?” They tell him, “Yes, you must be blest.”

Robert York