

THE SWAN
for Katharine

The swan folds her wings; you fold your hands
across your knee. Neither you nor she
were made for flight but in response to gloss
the silent room with summer calm so smooth
that your reflection in my eyes is mirrored
still more perfectly for that slight trembling
of line without which I might not know
you are a bird afloat upon the reed-edged
surface of my mind.

Tipped by a reddening sun, your tucked wings
lift in the chill; your eyes waver but once
hinting at a late stir among trailing
boughs on the far side; darkness soon; your face
ripples and I must go.

(circa 1941)