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Imaginary Biography of Graham Greene

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to joke a little about Oedipal suffering,
to destroy with brilliant irony the cretinism of all the maiden aunts
in the world:
the one who demanded that you learn to play the guitar,
the one who made you recite whenever she came to visit,
the one who recommended vitamins,
the one who gave you her home-made biscuits.
You ought to use a poem to say horrible things about your friends:
the one with a dried up soul,
the other who got fat and had two illegitimate children who'll someday
inherit his name,
the one who sleeps with the woman you want, or
the one who calls you up at midnight,
the other who has bad taste and is also a moralist.

You ought to make use of poetry. But no.

Translated by David W. Young

Imaginary Biography of Graham Greene

Failure is a kind of death:
today you know with certainty
of a child's horror when the hummingbirds
fly across his window to the garden
and he sees them, stunned:
it is daybreak.

Terror is a plague
and you never got rid
of that lump in your throat;
think back to the silence of clinics
when the world was the space
you could cover on your wheelchair.
Don't forget the day you found out
happiness is so fragile
it can be shattered by a word.
Bear in mind you had to choose
between lying and loathing,
that you were a deceitful ghost,

bear in mind the errors
you committed on account of style:
the raw flesh of habit,
the solitary vice of guilt,
the anxiety so poorly worn.
It won't be enough:
your voice a cold footstep over the past,
you vomiting the worm of faith.
Don't forget the bright morning sun
trapped in the room, the cherry tree
in the courtyard, the cistern among mulberries,
the flashes of joy
in the thick river of horror
*and remember that everything we could have been
must already have been there for better or worse.*

Stories 2

Esther tells your story:
(here we're talking about a thin air
that embroidered the house with a fragrance of timeless jasmine
and a cold rage of outcast)
You fell in love.
You fell in love
and so far yours could be a shoddy love story:
your large lock of hair and the yellowish photo
that today looks remote and somnolent,
your faint nostalgia
of hallways where you swore love forever etcetera
and the clandestine notes that began
My love My sweet beloved
(sugar syrup—white lily—
butterfly—heart and soul).
It happens that to you everything became distance,
eternal silence in the books,
and sullen like an icon you frightened the children.
Ever since the No of your father
you refused to talk to anyone
and today I feel that thirty years is too long