

The Bibliophile's Escape

Each night in lamp lit desperation,
searching for something to believe in,
you leaf through lives thick with significance
as if they could bring solace
in this dying light;
while upstairs
rising in white dreams,
she crosses the bed's expanse
and drifts over ice fields
beyond the windowpanes of her desire.
Each night she leaves
the cool linens of this life
to wander that silver river
beyond wanting, beyond the steady
sheen of what she has grown used to,
loosened from the abstract landscape
of her body.

Descending into the snow
of the page, your hand becomes transparent,
your body, invisible
as you caress its cool skin.
You follow the black tracks
to the edge of sense, to where they cover themselves
and turning, fuse,
branch-like in the surrounding dark.
Each line deepening the night
till at its tunnel's end
a haze envelops you
in that soft wash
you take inside.
When dawn grays your face with ash light,
you return to the morning house
silent and less warm.
This creaking house, the sound of her sighing
in her sleep, you begin an incarnation of hands
touching the edges of things in this twilight
which will bring you back
to the clock's steady discontent.
Soon you will hear her dressing,
moving through the upstairs
as if she were air. Each sound punctuated
by the silence she will become.

And in the coffee's familiar brew
and the teaspoon's clink on the china saucer,
you will follow her through the house.
Each moment a journey of loss.
Until, her words come strained and distant
as she crosses beyond the inevitable hush
of the front door
leaving you
in your solitude of things.

based on the woodcut
Bibliophile
by Felix Vallaton

C. Hood Frazier