

## THE MISCARRIAGE: HER DREAM

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*Robert Crum*

Tonight the air is milky with the windborne snow.  
Though the sky is heavy with stars and the moon  
is shining without its usual mercies, this field  
where I have come to know what I have lost  
is thinning whitely away around me.

And now, from the darkening woods, she comes, the girl,  
betraying with silence all I intended for her. Her head  
is lowered. She is up to her knees in snow. And her arms,  
it seems, are bent in prayer, though I know in her hands  
she is holding a little water, as much as could quench a flame.

Of course I am asleep. Otherwise I could not bear  
her coldness. And so far I have borne it well. I dream  
my sleep is this field where I am walking now,  
in my wrong body, the absent distance into a life  
that has no life outside of my desire for it.

We are so close I can see she is wearing  
the dress my mother wore the night before she died,  
the one with blue flowers on brown silk, a gold clasp  
above the breasts. And still she comes, careful not to spill  
the water. And I am likewise drawn, until we stand face

to face, ages away from each other. And though she has  
my husband's hair, and though she is looking at me  
through my own eyes, there is no language we can share,  
there is nothing either of us can say. The snow  
keeps rising on the wind. Her hair sweeps over her eyes.

The flowers all down the body of the flower-print dress—  
each one a soft spot, each one outlined in red—close.  
And the girl steps back into the snow, holding out  
the hands that I can never warm, holding there,  
the dark reflection of my waking face in ice.