

The Spa of the Posthumous ·  
*Sandra McPherson*

They have prepared the mud. We try  
    The rest cure, the thorn house, the inhalatorium.  
The men tip their hats, women twirl  
Their canes to each other on the walk.  
    Green and sky, pink sun canopies . . .  
We drink the pumped waters. The orchestra tromps.

I like the continuous balcony. Each room  
    Has antlers (antelope and roe deer),  
Pewter jug, pewter plate, pewter bottle.  
I get the pewter bowl from over the wainscoting,  
    Ladle bouillon from the tub in the hay-box.  
I unfold the bed, draw the deep

Red pullman curtains. When I sleep  
    I am further along the family tree:  
I can hardly remember the low German.  
I hear lo of angels, low  
    Chatter gulfs my pink casket.  
But it's really not finished: the digger has

Not quite prepared my therapeutic mud.  
    A shovel leans against a tree  
Behind the family. Look at their caution!—  
Wary of the rootless fly-green grass-cloth  
    They step up on to worship,  
Afraid it is hollow underneath . . .

I remember a brink like that: the day I watched them dig  
    A man who was building our sewer  
Out of the landslide.  
They were looking for his black hand  
    In the lithosphere, for the slope  
Of his hard hat. Now they are looking

For us all, the peachy bath attendants  
    Digging us out. Help me sir;  
Give me your arm as I step to the duckboards,  
Take the handshower to my old skin  
    To separate the clay  
From what I know as myself.