

Jacqueline Bishop

THE WOMAN IN THE PARK

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for Susan

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They are standing close to each other in the dark,
near to where the pink roses are, and dusk is beginning
to settle over their relationship. Someone, perhaps
it was the gardener, had gone over the grass with a scythe and the scent
of fresh cut grass hangs in the air, the grass
slowly going yellow. She is wildly wiping
the tears from her eyes, holding, in one hand, something
gone limp. Of course what she is holding is some part of herself –
some part of how she sees herself. His hands
are in his pockets, he paces back and forth,
moving between her and the other woman waiting, breathless, on the verandah.
The more she reaches for him, the more self
assured he becomes. I want to reach over and whisper to this woman:
Let him go! Let him go! You cannot force
a body to stay. I want to tell this woman, and the woman in the hazy distance,
both women that I have been, that in the meantime life goes on.
In the meantime the clean blue air forces itself under the door at dusk
and crawls up and over the window at dawn. Birds are, again, heading South,
and the apple tree, in the orchard, has showered
white blossoms, which will harden and darken into fruit.
Was it only last night that I watched, amazed
as my two black cats, began, again, to sniff each other? I want to tell
this woman, now alone, head bent,
that the heart that is broken can be mended;
When it heals, it yields its own special power.