THE KINGDOM OF CLOTH

The old house
which conceals
from sunlight
a negligible portion
of an English acre
has waged battle
with every manner
of the elements,
and is ready to fall.
It makes promises
to the ground
on each good day
of a grand reunion
some morning soon.

It will be wondrous
that glad sunrise
when the resting
shall come to pass,
when wood, tinnen,
shingle and nail
shall crash down,
the final splendor
to long journey
where the earth
shall take them
just so that
they might return
to face in glory
another good life.
But despite all her promises, 
the old maiden just can’t seem 
to bring herself to final curtain, 
to take at last the quiet fall. 
She holds out with purpose 
for her regent, for blessed Iona, 
Bethel’s fair daughter who came down 
from blue sky to be its first 
and humble queen.

Once this province was the kingdom of all fabric, 
a place of creation, where wild organza and garish madras 
shared secrets with voile and simple cotton and the extravagant crepe de chine, 
where elegant thread and buttons born in luminous shells from sea bottom each waited in turn upon her grace.

The old house bows down now, 
this vacant palace built on a patch of volcanic ground in the spread of the lonely jagged mountain named for misery
and with its shroud
made up of the fog
which did keep
its company
all the beautiful day
and every night,
while its queen
kept her reign
by lamplight.

Make haste Iona,
find your way
by Carib ocean,
to offer the kingdom
one final command.
The old house
it is long weary,
so much memory
a burden to keep.
Grant it now
your permission
for sunlight
again to warm
the hidden ground,
for green grass
to come again,
for earth to prosper
with the worth
of the cleansing rain.

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