

*Tregenza Roach*

## 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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