

Matthew Burns

Friscalating Dusklight

We know nothing is real in this false night.
The runaway son doesn't really love his adopted sister
who's secretly been sleeping with his childhood best friend,
the drug-addled cowboy author
whose mediocre first book was, he now admits,
"written in a kind of obsolete vernacular."
None of them even exist.
Nor does the long-absent patriarch
who, having been evicted from his hotel,
now fakes a case of stomach cancer
so he can return to the family brownstone
and meddle in his abandoned wife's new romance.
There is no widower brother
compulsively obsessed with safety;
and the mice he bred as a child:
nothing but white spots on a white page.
We know this with all our hearts and do not care.
In the quiet snowfall of the projector's frames,
this is all we need to know: we will laugh and cry
and feel some strange relief when it all ends in the cemetery.
Then we will talk through the long list of credits
and out the usher-held doors into the rising night,
where our wide eyes, still dilated from the dark theater's lies,
will again need time to adjust to life outside,
where we all know the million ways love can fail,
where even the friscalating dusklight hanging on after the show
is more than any of us can take.

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