

“On the Asylum Road”

Theirs is the house whose windows—every pane—
Are made of darkly stained or clouded glass:
Sometimes you come upon them in the lane,
The saddest crowd that you will ever pass.

But still we merry town or village folk
Throw to their scattered stare a kindly grin,
And think no shame to stop and crack a joke
With the incarnate wages of man’s sin.

None but ourselves in our long gallery we meet,
The moor-hen stepping from her reeds with dainty feet,
The hare-bell bowing on its stem,
Dance not with us; their pulses beat
To fainter music; nor do we to them
Make their life sweet.

The gayest crowd that they will ever pass
Are we to brother-shadows in the lane:
Our windows, too, are clouded glass
To them, yes, every pane!

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