

The New Criterion

Poems November 2011

The dreamer

by James Cummins

Now it's snowing again. Up in her room,
my thirteen-year-old Margaret plays her tunes.
The phone rings; it's a boy. I take a nap.
Front-window sun encases me in gold;
I'm growing old. I love my bite-sized naps,
though nightlong sleep eludes me, and I wake,
too early, with the thought my life is gone.
But even in this dream I know my luck:
my Margaret, two years old, approaches me;
she's wearing her pink sundress that she loves.
Her hair is gold; her face, above great joy,
has found a piece of life that doesn't fit.
Her momentary frown catches my heart;
the sleeper's one with the dream father now.
What's real? The question's fake, because it asks
a world that's no longer a world to answer.
I wake and go upstairs; her door is locked.
I knock. My thirteen-year-old lets me in.

James Cummins's new book, *Still Some Cake*, will be out in January (Carnegie Mellon).

This article originally appeared in *The New Criterion*, Volume 30 Number 3 , on page 30

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