

Fancies by Gaslight

"The colour of grass is green," she said, but you knew better, looking at the winter's harvest.

"Isn't the birdsong lovely?" Or does the meaningless chatter wreck the solitude of your silence?

"It's a great day outside, let's go for a walk." But the rain drilled into your shoulders and left you huddled by the unlit fire.

"You'll feel better soon. It will all be all right." Platitudes? Misdirection? Deceit?

"It's completely safe." A phrase supplied for all eventualities, but obviously applicable to none.

You knew, you had always known, that the world was not a bright or sunny place. But she told you otherwise; repeated her optimism; spoke in a cheerful voice. And she made you doubt your judgement, your knowledge, the evidence of your own heart. The reports of your eyes rewritten by her unshakeable resolve.

"You are talented and clever." Why would she say such a thing?

"You're not sad, you're just tired." The tightness in your throat questioned her assertion.

"You are handsome." A claim so absurd as to be transparent.

"It's getting dark," she says, turning up the lamp so that the shadows deepen, dancing in the mirrors.

"There are others worse off than us," which may be true, but is unhelpfully irrelevant. At best, a distraction from reality.

"You know I love you," she says, though you know that cannot be true.

"There's still some heat in the ashes." You have been raking them over since dawn, but they are cold and bitter giving the lie to what she says.

Darkness like a scar.