

The Housekeeper

Now it is at his grave that she keeps
House, clearing the leaves that settle
From the somber trees, talking with a click
Of stems against his stone before silence.
The stone in spring takes a shine after rain;
Weeding the grass and loosening the webs
That web-makers weave along stone's edge,
She does spring-cleaning in all the corners
Of his hiding-place. Like others who dust
And keep a man's house, she knows how
Unexplained moments of happiness can occur,
As when a circuit of the baseboards on her knees
Might bring her up short before the bookcase
With suddenly no need to read even titles
Written against the glass for her to possess
All that is in there of human reaching out
For love. With hands as much as with memory,
She tries to reach him, talking to him
About the insubstantial past they shared
Together; and unexplained, a moment of happiness
Occurs: she is talking to him gone, and he hears.

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