Ex Machina

By Linda Gregerson

When love was a question, the message arrived in the beak of a wire and plaster bird. The coloratura was hardly to be believed. For flight,

it took three stagehands: two on the pulleys and one on the flute. And you thought fancy rained like grace.

Our fog machine lost in the Parcel Post, we improvised with smoke. The heroine dies of tuberculosis after all. Remorse and the raw night air: any plausible tenor might cough. The passions, I take my clues from an obvious source, may be less like climatic events than we conventionalize, though I’ve heard of tornadoes that break the second-best glassware and leave everything else untouched. There’s a finer conviction than seamlessness elicits: the Greeks knew a god by the clanking behind his descent. The heart, poor pump, protests till you’d think it’s rusted past redemption, but there’s tuning in these counterweights, celebration’s assembled voice.


Source: Fire in the Conservatory (Dragon Gate, 1982)