Janet Waking

By John Crowe Ransom

Beautifully Janet slept
   Till it was deeply morning. She woke then
   And thought about her dainty-feathered hen,
   To see how it had kept.

One kiss she gave her mother,
   Only a small one gave she to her daddy
   Who would have kissed each curl of his shining baby;
   No kiss at all for her brother.

“Old Chucky, Old Chucky!” she cried,
   Running across the world upon the grass
   To Chucky’s house, and listening. But alas,
   Her Chucky had died.

It was a transmogrifying bee
   Came droning down on Chucky’s old bald head
   And sat and put the poison. It scarcely bled,
   But how exceedingly

And purply did the knot
   Swell with the venom and communicate
   Its rigour! Now the poor comb stood up straight
   But Chucky did not.

So there was Janet
   Kneeling on the wet grass, crying her brown hen
   (Translated far beyond the daughters of men)
   To rise and walk upon it.

And weeping fast as she had breath
   Janet implored us, “Wake her from her sleep!”
   And would not be instructed in how deep
   Was the forgetful kingdom of death.
