

# 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 purple 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.

John Crowe Ransom, "Janet Waking" from *Selected Poems, Third Edition, Revised and Enlarged*. Copyright © 1924, 1927 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc and renewed 1952, 1955 by John Crow Ransom. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of the Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, a division of Random House LLC. All rights reserved.

Source: *Selected Poems Third Edition* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1978)