

Portrait d'une Femme

By Ezra Pound

Your mind and you are our Sargasso Sea,
 London has swept about you this score years
And bright ships left you this or that in fee:
 Ideas, old gossip, oddments of all things,
Strange spars of knowledge and dimmed wares of price.
 Great minds have sought you — lacking someone else.
You have been second always. Tragical?
 No. You preferred it to the usual thing:
One dull man, dulling and uxorious,
 One average mind — with one thought less, each year.
Oh, you are patient, I have seen you sit
 Hours, where something might have floated up.
And now you pay one. Yes, you richly pay.
 You are a person of some interest, one comes to you
And takes strange gain away:
 Trophies fished up; some curious suggestion;
Fact that leads nowhere; and a tale for two,
 Pregnant with mandrakes, or with something else
That might prove useful and yet never proves,
 That never fits a corner or shows use,
Or finds its hour upon the loom of days:
 The tarnished, gaudy, wonderful old work;
Idols and ambergris and rare inlays,
 These are your riches, your great store; and yet
For all this sea-hoard of deciduous things,
 Strange woods half sodden, and new brighter stuff:
In the slow float of differing light and deep,
 No! there is nothing! In the whole and all,
Nothing that's quite your own.
 Yet this is you.