

Semi-Splendid

By Tracy K. Smith

You flinch. Something flickers, not fleeing your face. My
Heart hammers at the ceiling, telling my tongue
To turn it down. Too late. The something climbs, leaps, is
Falling now across us like the prank of an icy, brainy
Lord. I chose the wrong word. I am wrong for not choosing
Merely to smile, to pull you toward me and away from
What you think of as that other me, who wanders lost among ...
Among whom? The many? The rare? I wish you didn't care.

I watch you watching her. Her very shadow is a rage
That trashes the rooms of your eyes. Do you claim surprise
At what she wants, the poor girl, pelted with despair,
Who flits from grief to grief? Isn't it you she seeks? And
If you blame her, know that she blames you for choosing
Not her, but me. Love is never fair. But do we — should we — care?