The Unbrought Me: Henry James Dearly Suffuses

Eli Siegel
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HENRY JAMES DEARLY SUFFUSES

Thoughtfully he looked at her profile there,
Sensitive in the London air
Pervading the distinguished room.
Something in him began to flutter and loom,
If loom is not too utter a verb.—
Ah, but now the profile did not disturb;
From interior something there was access
Of saving, beseeched for consciousness,
Annulling Valton’s unshaped distress.
The lady said: It is not last year.—
Valton said: Ah, the fear
That once abided in such a phrase.
(Has, for you, fear ever abided in a phrase?)
How gratifyingly she said, Your fear does not amaze
Me a whit. Ah no, for where but in a phrase
Should one find fear? Certainly I know, others do elsewhere.
They do not know fear so well, Mr. Valton. No.
—With such assurance we can go
To apprehension that is fair.—
She no longer was a profile. She
At last had seen in Mr. Valton the unsuspected elsewhere,
The uncertain, unbrought me.

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