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JOHN ALEXANDER ALLEN

*A KIND OF QUEST,
A SORT OF BRIAR ROSE*

After the windy sighs were done, for once
And all, the pigeons on the gritty sill
Bemoaned, or so it seemed, in monotones,
Illicit pleasure in the city's tall
Hotels, and pain in broken assignments.

He, for whom the service elevator,
Rising, should have quelled a miracle
Of continence too long preserved by war
And angels, waited faithfully, but hall
And stolid door purveyed no paramour.

Still, the midget citizens pursued
Their paths of fretted industry below,
As though precipitated down a chute;
And only he, beneath a laden bough,
Had leisure to regret the wasted fruit.

No stranger to that insulated room,
He rang the changes on a message meant
For every solitary girl whose name
His wish had conjured with; but discontent
Eschewed the pigeons roosting in the grime.

He took the wedded pigeons to betoken
Pleasure, waiting in the wings to heed
An honest suit. How sweet to lie forsaken
Yet a while, and contemplate the bride
No prince could fail, nor any kiss awaken!