

Wilderness House Literary Review 2/4

Marc Jampole

Garbo At 48

Not the comically tense Ninotchka,
but the silent *passionata* of silent films,
black hair cutting high cheek bones,
like sharp etchings of diamond on ice,
casting olive shadows on a flawlessly angled chin.

Glacial waters run deep when Garbo speaks,
and when she smiles, the face dissolving,
a yearning emerges, burns and forms a question:

What are her thoughts and can I possess them
as I occasionally possess
the warmth beneath her sweater,
the elegant map of freckles cross her limbs,
the brown quicksilver of her eyes?

That deep smile is the *Q.E.D.* of physical love,
distinct from admiration, from partnership,
from social obligation or mutual interest,
from mutual habit, benefit, shared wealth,
in which ideas about the flesh dissolve
and flesh itself remains.

In my next life, I want to come back
as rain in the forest and her as the forest.
These are my thoughts outside.