

Wilderness House Literary Review 9/1

Richard Schmap
GALATEA

In the days of my youth
I romanced two mistresses
In phone rooms by day
And cabarets by night

One was a woman
Of plastic and wires
I learned to seduce
With a sure lover's tongue

The other was a girl
With smooth wooden skin
Who I taught how to sing
When I held her in my arms

And when I look back
I see they were the same
An instrument I touched
That awoke just for me

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IMPERSONATOR

He was raised to detest
The sound of his voice
So he learned to steal
The ones of others

So that when he was writing
His college application
He plagiarized his essay
From a once-famous philosopher

And when his fiancée asked
If he truly cherished her
He recited the words
Of an obscure love poem

But when his son pleaded
To know if he'd pleased him
He could only reply
With the silence of a stone

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SOUNDING BOARD

Sometimes she felt
Like someone else's voice mail
Set to record
The solicitations of strangers

Or else a stenographer
In a crowded courtroom
Transcribing the testimony
Of witnesses to crimes

While other times a priest
In a darkened confession booth
Hearing the guilty
Admit to their sins

But when she was alone
She became her own therapist
Who simply listened
Without saying a word