

SWIFT

TAXIDERMIES

1919-1922

Taxidermy (from the Greek :arrangement of skin) is the art of preparing, stuffing, and mounting the skins of animals (especially vertebrates) for display (e.g., as hunting trophies) or for other sources of study. Taxidermy can be done on all vertebrate species of animals, including mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, and amphibians.



and here I am
under this black
crisp hair, frank eyes, and honest English skin



and here I am
a big-lipp'd surprise
breast-deep 'mid flower and spine
my skin is like a grape, whose veins
run snow instead of wine



and here I am
mid struggling sufferers, hurt to death, I lie
shuddering and drawing my garments off—and they find
a robe of sackcloth next my smooth, white skin



and here I am
amber beads between my breasts
and blind-worm's skin about my knee



and here I am
on a path where the snake's cast skin is lying
blue feathers on the floor, and no cuckoo flying



and here I am
bright as a dragon-fly's skin



and here I am
chicken-skin, delicate, white
painted by Carlo Vanloo
loves in a riot of light
roses and vaporous blue



and here I am
singing not that violet-veinèd skin
that cheek's pale roses
the lily of that form wherein
my soul reposes



and here I am
my cheeks are like the cherry
my skin is white as snow
when I am blithe and merry



and here I am
so bright of hyd and hue



and here I am
while the youthful hue
sits on thy skin like morning dew
and while my willing soul transpires
at every pore with instant fires



and here I am
O bonnie, bonnie is my mouth
and cherry are my cheeks
and clear, clear is my yellow hair
whereupon the red blood dreips



and here I am
my lips are red, my looks are free
my locks are yellow as gold
my skin was as white as leprosy



and here I am
made of a weevil's skin
yet all's not worth a pin



and here I am
leaving the easy trail to follow the desert's lure;
I'm marked with the signs of its branding—wild eye, black
lip, raw skin
through hunger, thirst, through hell I'll go to follow the
curséd thing



and here I am
my skin is rosy copper-red
and high I hold my beauteous head.
my step is like a rustling leaf
my heart a nest untouched of grief
I dream of sons like Powhatan
and through my blood the lightning runs



and here I am
in the dimness of the shadow
but the whiteness of my skin
is like a clean ship's sail
standing out in the darkness of a night



and here I am
my tawny skin, sleek
with clean aridity
lies unpunctured by man's growth



and here I am
a white magnolia
of lucent petals
textured like woman skin
crumpling to leather
limp and brown
binding a story told