

THE QUEEN OF CAMBRIDGE

HOW she invents words, confuses lost girls, runs
her hands across white-hot jasmine, ravages through
her torn bolts & skeins of shot-silk hair. O dark.
O how we all *admire* her, adore, want too to have one
secret, an uncanny tremor, a rumour of drugs,
a filthy nasty delectable papery cigarette habit;
a hurt, an oven, a pale blue home with pearwood
and expensive cats for butlers (when they deign
to come to the door at all). There's a shut liquor
store on the corner at the end of the block, there's
rain. And neon. And a drunk. But when you turn
down her wet street it's all hydrangeas & colonial
New England clapboard like witches—like her,
herself, purring in a hoarse incantatory monotone.

Getting clear is the very last thing you do.
You have to cut out once, cleanly, then run
like all of Salem is in a pack howling after you.