


2016

Above the Public Place

Samantha Pious

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/pms>

 Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#), and the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Pious, Samantha (2016) "Above the Public Place," *PoemMemoirStory*. Vol. 15, Article 26.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/pms/vol15/iss2016/26>

This content has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of the UAB Digital Commons, and is provided as a free open access item. All inquiries regarding this item or the UAB Digital Commons should be directed to the [UAB Libraries Office of Scholarly Communication](#).

ABOVE THE PUBLIC PLACE

The drifting clouds unfurled in the pure sky
As though a scarf the soft gray-blue of linen.
I was young and fervent, and I had a harp.
The world appeared to me, soft and feminine.

In the woods, gray amaranthine violets
Made my wide eyes rejoice. The laugh
Of Irish shepherds' wandering hearts and souls
Welled up within me, from the distant past.

The tree-sap filled me with many a drunkenness,
And I drank up that marvelous wine, uncaring.
I wandered with my harp and its great promise
And knew not what a treasure I was bearing.

One day, I followed the women and the men
Toward the blue-roofed city. I went down,
From dark and fiery woods, to follow them,
And I bore my harp all through the town.

And then I sang above the public place
From which a stench of rotten fish was stirring,
But, intoxicated with my music's sound,
I did not hear the market's murmuring.

For I remembered all that the wise trees
Had told me, in the silence of the woods.
All around, the catcalls and the whistles
Mingled with the hawking of their goods.

A woman saw me, offered me her hand
In the mob shrieking out its greed and wrath,
But, borne away by the summons of a breeze,
She disappeared at the turning of the path.

I sang sincerely: so all shepherds sing.
All around, the vile noise was waning,
And, as the sunset cast its firelight,
I saw I was alone and day was fading.

I sang without a witness, for the joy
Of singing, as one does when love takes flight,
When hope mocks, when oblivion destroys.
The harp broke under my hands, in the night.

At the Hour of Hand in Hand, 1906