Walt and Emily Revisited

The Mirror Girl
(In the Style of Walt Whitman)

What is this tear-sodden mess of me I see when I look upon
Some simple reflective surface?
What is it?
My soul?
My life?

The one of me in the mirror touches back pointedly, cruelly,
with the opposite finger of mine,
And glares as I scowl,
Frowns as I look on with disappointment at the image
hovering
there upon the wall.
The me in the window glass shrinks away in pain and fear
when I
step between her thin face and the light on the table,
Disappears into the black night like a vagrant, wandering spir-
it,
Disembodied,
Searching for a human home.

Me in the pond behind the barn at noon is the most fragile of
all.
She trembles and quivers if I lean over for a closer look and
breathe,
Breaks if I try to touch her hair, just to see if it is the same as
mine,
And I pull back my hand to find it covered in her clear, cold
blood.
But the one of me in the pond is strongest, too, I think.

I drop the mirror me,
She breaks into jagged, human pieces,
And I can fit them together so that she is mostly there,
Set her face aright again,
But she refuses to heal--scars of neglect cross her face
every time I look.

All good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings:
it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity.

-William Wordsworth
And the windowpane me,
The night one who stands begging outside the window in winter,
Disappears at first light only to return again every evening,
as weary from the day as I.
But the watered me,
The watered soul of me is so strong,
I can slash at her forever with a knife,
Spit on her in animosity,
Kick, scream, and stomp my feet in her face,
And nothing fazes her.
She reforms every time, slowly,
Looks up at me from her damp resting place in echoed amazement,
Then laughs as though to share in my amusement.

The Mirror Girl---stares back at me---
(In the Style of Emily Dickinson)

The Mirror Girl---stares back at me---
With a Look that knows too much---
And a Skin that's never felt the Burn
Of a soft---caressing---Touch

She speaks with Lips that smile---and laugh---
But never have been---kissed---
And cries with careful---Countenance---
That never has been missed
The Mirror Girl is cold and crystal---
Hard enough to feel---
But who is to say, on the other Side,
She's not the One who's real?

The Mirror Girl is a stoic Thing---
That does not pain or ache---
But while I suffer and endure---
The Mirror Girl merely---breaks

--Brigid Spackman,
Tenth grade, James E. Taylor Sr. High School,
Katy, Texas

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